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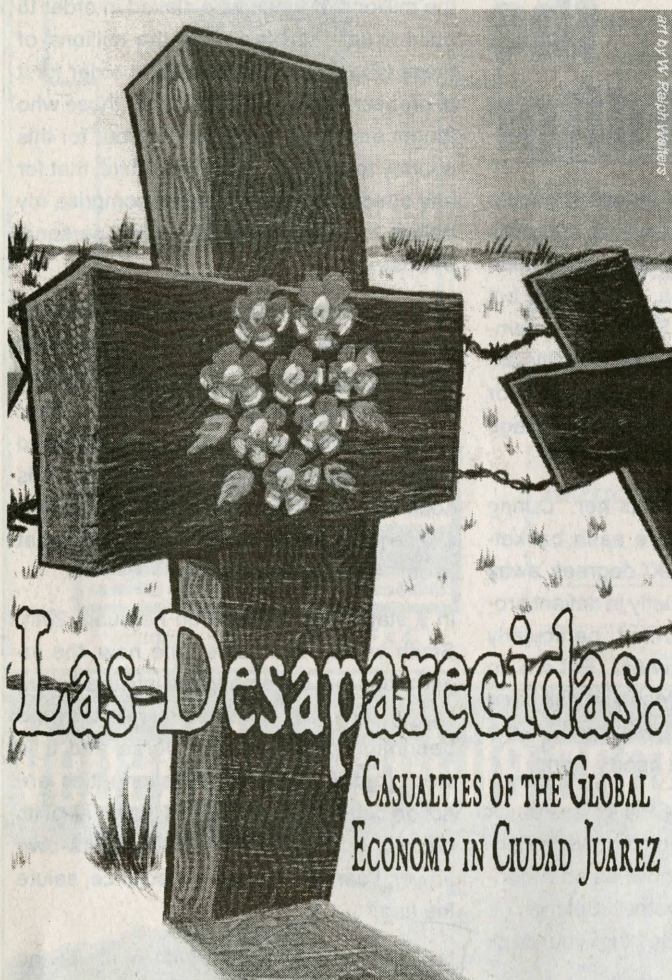
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things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 44 • APRIL/MAY 2003



by Kari Lydersen

During the past 10 years, over 300 women have been murdered in Juarez, Mexico, just across the border from El Paso. Most of them worked at the maquiladoras (factories) along the border; many of them were found mutilated and raped, left in shallow graves. Locals blame the police along with jealous husbands, sex offenders, drug traffickers and, on a larger scale, the global economy that gave birth to the maquiladoras. • PAGE 26

"These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest." -- Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1967

"[A]s long as human beings will go on shedding the blood of animals, there will never be any peace. There is only one little step from killing animals to creating gas chambers à la Hitler and concentration camps à la Stalin. ...There will be no justice as long as man will stand with a knife or with a gun and destroy those who are weaker than he is." -- Isaac Bashevis Singer, Yiddish writer and vegetarian

CONTENTS:

Notes From the Cultural Wasteland by Morris Sullivan: Sometimes, you just don't want to be in the position to say, "I told you so." This is one of those times. • PAGE 8

Demise of Asian Antelope Should Be a Warning to Us by Dr. David Suzuki: It may be too late to save the odd-looking saiga, but it should be a warning to us about the fragile state of Earth. • PAGE 10

Media War: Obsessed with Tactics and Technology by Norman Solomon: With American troops busy at work in Iraq, the media fixations are largely tactical and ignore moral questions. • PAGE 11

Overpriced Musings by Don Pflaster: Worse Things – Is this war a signal that America is becoming an empire, preparing to conquer and impose our form of government on the globe? • PAGE 12

The Fresno Frenzy: Invasion of the Animal and Earth Liberation Fronts by Dr. Steven Best: One university had the courage to put on their "Revolutionary Environmentalism" conference despite vocal protests. Dr. Steven Best, one of the participants, gives us an inside look. • PAGE 14

COMICS: The Muddlemarch by Neal Skorpen • PAGE 21

Roy Jones, Jr. Ruffles Animal Activists' Feathers by Heather Moore: The boxing champion is now facing one of his toughest opponents, PETA, after disclosing he raises roosters for cockfighting. • PAGE 22

The Empire Needs New Clothes by Thom Hartmann: The current administration has a specific vision for the future of America and the world. In order to put forward an alternative vision, it's essential to understand the vision held by the New Right. • PAGE 24

Peace is Hell by Nick Gillespie: It's a strange sort of war, one that's essentially over before it begins. But winning the war will be easy compared to winning the peace. • PAGE 30

The U.S. Army: A Class Action Suit Waiting To Happen by Jeff Nall: Should the U.S. Army be issuing a disclaimer to potential recruits? "WARNING: Joining the U.S. Army has been shown to cause disfigurement, serious injury and even death." • PAGE 34

The Myth of Objective Journalism by Adam Finley: Backing away from satire for the moment, Finley shares his thoughts on "the most intellectually refreshing [hour] of my young adult life." • PAGE 40

COMIC: The K Chronicles by Keith Knight • PAGE 41

Watchdogs, Lapdogs and Sleeping Dogs by Will Potter: Journalists like to think of themselves as watchdogs. Progressive critics see them as lapdogs for the political and corporate elite. More often reporters are just tired old dogs asleep on the porch. • PAGE 44

Peace Candidate Wants To Be President...And He's a Democrat by Josh Frank: Ohio State Rep. Dennis Kucinich has been the most outspoken critic of the Bush administration's reactions to September 11th, the dismantling of our civil liberties under Ashcroft's Patriot Act, and the war against Iraq. • PAGE 47

Quickies - A Little Bit On A Lot of Records • PAGES 50-57

Activist Event Listings: Join a protest, attend a rally. • PAGE 57

QUOTES:

IMPACT press

covering issues the way the media should

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A Fact from IMPACT: On June 16, 1456, King Charles VII of France annulled a judgment of heresy against Joan of Arc, 25 years after she had been burned at the stake.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From the Editor

As bombs rain down on innocent people across the Atlantic, with the fear and risks facing the Iraqi people barely touched upon by the mainstream media, I can't help but think about Toni Smith. She's not a member of the military, nor is she a politician. Smith is a basketball player for Manhattanville, a small liberal arts college in the suburbs north of New York City.

Maybe you have heard about her. During the national anthem before each basketball game, Smith turns 90 degrees away from the flag, standing quietly in defiant protest. It's a strong statement, particularly during these "patriotic" times. But it's an important statement, and one that has been misinterpreted and misrepresented by the media, particularly in the sports world.

Most notably to me was ESPN's Dan Patrick who, during one of his radio shows in February, rambled on about how, as an American, you have a right to protest. But then he went on to say you shouldn't turn your back on the flag.

Why not? Prior to our slaughter of Native Americans in order to claim this land as ours, many of our ancestors turned their backs on the British flag to create a nation that allows dissent and protest. American soldiers have fought for that right.

Instead, the news and sports commentators said Smith didn't respect America and didn't respect our troops who, at that time, were starting to mobilize for a forthcoming attack on Iraq. But this was simply untrue. They either failed to listen to what Smith actually said about her demonstrations or chose to ignore them in order to further their own jingoistic idealism.

During a press conference in late February, Toni Smith spoke out: "The flag means

to me, first it means, it stands for the millions and millions of indigenous people who were massacred to claim it. It means the millions of those who slaved in order to build it up. And it means the millions of those who are still oppressed in order for it to prosper. It also does stand for those who fought and gave their lives in order for this country to prosper. But I don't think that for any specific purpose I should compromise my beliefs to accommodate people's personal offenses."

At a time when our government seems to be acting with selfish interests, her protest is extremely timely. Her feelings about the flag are not only justified, but accurate. That is the history of our nation. It is bloodied with inequality, century after century. It is sour with the stench of manifest destiny; it's about preordainment and taking what is our "God-given" right.

In a statement released on February 20th, Smith wrote, "For some time now, the inequalities that are embedded into the American system have bothered me. As they are becoming progressively worse and it is clear that the government's priorities are not on bettering the quality of life for all of its people, but rather on expanding its own power, I cannot, in good conscience, salute the flag."

Now, as we are at war, with much of the world's citizens firmly opposed, her actions speak louder than ever. We, as Americans, must realize that patriotism is not measured by the amount with which we blindly accept our government's actions. Instead, it is measured by the amount of courage we have to speak out when we feel that our government is wronging its citizens.

"The notion that a radical is one who hates his country is naive and usually idiotic. He is, more likely, one who likes his country more than the rest of us, and is thus more disturbed than the rest of us when he sees it debauched. He is not a bad citizen turning to crime; he is a good citizen driven to despair." — H.L. Menken

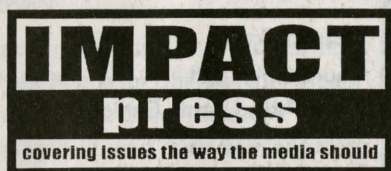
• craig mazer •

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Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

IMPACT:

I picked up your mag in SF. What is the deal with you people? Is there anything about America you don't hate?

I find it quite disturbing to read page after page of what is basically hate literature directed towards the country that we all live in. If you hate the USA so much, why don't you go and live in Iraq or Palestine, or some country that is oppressed by the Imperialist Empire that you hate so much. Your magazine is unbalanced, one sided and completely blinkered in favour of any cause which is part of a downtrodden (as perceived by you) minority.

For example the cartoon in the latest issue #43 about blacks would have us believe that black people are on death row purely because of discrimination. This is such a tired old argument that it's laughable these days. Statistics will show that the most violent offenders belong to certain groups, and statistics don't lie. These people are on death row because they are violent people, not because of their color. Racial discrimination exists for all races and all colors, and it still doesn't excuse violent and anti-social behavior. It's Liberal rubbish that "free thinking" educators, and minorities with no talent, or ability and an axe to grind have been brainwashing everyone with since the bloody Vietnam War. Their mission is to render you stupid by that kind of muddy, white, guilt ridden thinking that is making society for everybody unbearable, and allowing anti American feeling and terrorism to flourish.

Do the terrorists have the answer? Is Palestine the sort of place you'd want to live in? I guess you'd all become suicide bombers for the cause. Would you? As for the story about concentration camps ("What Next, Concentration Camps?" Racial Profiling In The War On Terrorism"). I guess if we just let everybody

come into the country and give them a copy of your magazine, especially middle eastern men, with a penchant for destroying innocent civilians, we will all be in a Muslim Fundamentalist concentration camp eventually. That's if they allow us to convert to Islam, they might let us live.

Good luck with your magazine, but you might want to entertain a more balanced approach in your publication. At the moment it looks to me like some kind of fundamentalist, hard line Taliban manifesto! (I doubt if they would allow such freedom of speech though.)

Regards,
Jack Abbott

IMPACT:

With all my heart and soul, I believe in the writings of Dr. [Steven] Best. My biggest challenge, as all ours must be, is to cultivate political assistance by finding like-minded people who are willing to dawn the political cap, and jump head over heels into the arena. We can have God on our side, be right, be morally on the righteous path, but until we nurture and coax our own into the House and Senate, we will remain but a whisper unto ourselves, and ignored mostly by the increasingly corporate run global governments.

The Byrds and the Wellstones, the Boxers and the Feingolds need other voices to raise the swords of powerful language and insight. 2004 is just around the corner and we need candidates in there. HSUS, PETA, HFA, IDA, FARM, Farm Sanctuary, and all the other groups, along with the Sierra Club, NRDC, and all the other groups, needs to join in a collective search engine to find a few good men and women that they can support financially, creatively, and politically to have more voices in Congress. Perhaps it would be suicide, as I fear anyone too vocal about

animal protection legislation, nutritional overhaul for disease prevention, and the other challenging factors that pose tremendous threats to our world, might be met with dangerous consequences. Who cares, it's time to fight the good fight in their faces!

What about the birth of an entirely new party? The Humane Party, for example, with a vast agenda of political action that focuses on social, environmental and animal issues? The Dutch just formed a new party for these things.

I'm up for it.

Gratefully,
Laura Aaron Slitt
Earth Friend Farm, Bartlett, NH

IMPACT:

In response to the article "Porno Posse Rides Against Free Expression" (Issue #43), I see your point that the "crime fighters" in Florida are violating Free Press, but I don't feel there is a need to actually put effort in to writing an article about it. Something like this, dealing with 2 evils (1 being pornography and 1 being our violated rights), I feel it is an unnecessary addition to the millions of other problems we are struggling with. The biggies, of course, being peace and the health of humans and the environment.

In my opinion, pornography is disgusting. I think it ruined me when I was younger, and hearing the many around me, I feel it has ruined them too. I have recovered though. (Laugh) Yes, we should struggle for free press and expression, but should we struggle for double-anal penetration!? But I still see your point. It's another tough issue.

Andre Entermann

Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

IMPACT:

I was impressed by this article ("Who Is The Real Enemy?" by Peggy Butler, Issue #42). It is one of the very few I have ever read where a black writer has looked at one of the problems in the black community and not blamed whites for it. If more blacks were to read this, and take it to heart, maybe some changes could be made.

Thanks,
Tom Micele

IMPACT:

I read Patti Howard's recent article titled "A New Phase for China's Moon Bears" (Issue #43) and want to thank you for running it. It was crisp and engaging reading, and a both heart-wrenching and heartwarming story. I first learned of the plight of these bears at a conference last year, and I pray for the day that the last of those horrible cages is emptied and destroyed.

Jonathan Balcombe, Ph.D.
Germantown, Maryland, USA

IMPACT:

Thank you so much for Patricia Howard's compelling and informative article about China's Moon Bears and Jill Robinson's AnimalsAsia Foundation ("A New Phase For China's Moon Bears" Issue #43). Most people are unaware of the horrendous farms set up in China to extract bile from these precious bears. There should be no circumstance when the systematic torture of innocent beings is condoned; particularly for a "natural" remedy that is qualified by experts like Dr. Steer as capable of reproduction through alternate means. It is through the heroic and heart-felt efforts of people like Jill

Robinson that awareness is raised and the opportunity for compassionate change is generated. Otherwise, these kinds of horrible practices continue unchallenged. Thank you, again, for highlighting this issue.

Sincerely,
Johanna McCloy
Oakland, CA

IMPACT:

Thank you for this article on the Moon Bears ("A New Phase For China's Moon Bears" by Patricia Howard, Issue #43). I had the honor of hearing and talking with Jill Robinson in Raleigh, NC this summer. Her report of what these poor animals endured at the hands of humans is shocking and terrible. And the suffering goes on, as most are still prisoners. Thank Gaia for people like Robinson, and for your efforts to help her worthy cause.

Rosemary Lowe
Camden, Maine

IMPACT:

This article had such an impact on me ("New Phase For China's Moon Bears" by Patricia Howard, Issue #43)! I had never heard about the use of bears (or any animals for that matter) used for their bile. It's horrific enough that animals are tested on and slaughtered for our betterment, but for animals to have to live under these torturous conditions is devastating.

I appreciated Ms. Howard's skill at giving us the facts, giving us the startling visual of the environment, and yet allowing us to be further involved with the bears personally, painfully.

Sincerely,
Lisa Jan Sherman

IMPACT:

I thoroughly enjoyed your article on bear farming and the rescue effort underway by AnimalsAsia. It is so important for animal cruelty issues to receive coverage so that efforts like that by AnimalsAsia can receive support. I will be sure to send them a donation because I commend this kind of important work. Society as a whole benefits when we foster compassion for all living creatures.

Tracey Hammer
Westport, CT

IMPACT:

Great article. I agree 100%. Of course, I am paranoid and more so now that I have read your column.

I get frustrated and beaten down, but then I think, "Well, what else can I do but keep fighting?" Mine may be a small contribution, but I am not going to let these Bush people win. It's going to be hard for them to get something on me, but I am aware it may get that bad. I just keep talking to friends, supporting people like you, supporting ok politicians, signing petitions....whatever I can do. For all the paranoia, I think we will prevail.

Why are so many Americans confused by Bush? I know the conventional explanations, but people have got to get their acts together. Somehow we have got to get people to take the responsibility for our democracy.

Sylvia Silliman

IMPACT:

Nice try but get over it. For your info just one more time "BIG AL GORE LOST"!!!!!! Live with it. Bush this four and the next four. At last we get some clear headed judges!! Support Your Local Nuclear Power Plant!

Kenneth Hathaway

Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



I saw the most amazing thing this past March.

I attended a talk by a world-famous yogi at a university near my home. About 80 people attended the talk. They represented the sort of cross section one would expect to see: college students from a comparative religion class; students, teachers, and devotees from area "yoga for health"-type classes; curious folks interested in hearing what this well-known holy man had to say; and at least one journalist. I couldn't identify a single bona fide weirdo.

I was there as sort of a half-human, half-journalist. On a personal level, I was interested in hearing what the guy had to say. While I wasn't assigned to give the event coverage, I was working on another story in which I thought a quote or two from a famous yogi might fit.

He started by leading those assembled in chanting "Om" and some other mantras. It was quite lovely, really. When he began speaking, he made pretty good sense. I wrote down some of his more quotable comments. I even started thinking maybe I should start practicing yoga again, something I'd not done regularly since shortly after the Beatles' disenchantment with the Maharishi.

The yogi then performed a demonstration: He asked us to sit quietly and watch while he relaxed somewhat melodramatically (I know—that sounds like an oxymoron, but if you were there you'd know what I mean), followed by a deep slow breath, which he released with a drawn-out, staccato huh! huh! huh! huh!

He opened his eyes and gazed beneficently at his audience, letting it all sink in, before asking, "When I did that, what did you feel?" Apparently, most of the audience thought that was a rhetorical question, because no one answered until he prodded a little, asking us a couple more times what we felt when watching him breathe. (I felt a little silly, by the way).

Finally, a woman answered, "Calm."

The yogi prodded her for more: Did she feel calm, or was she saying he seemed calm? He led her into a sort of admission that watching him made her feel calm, whereupon another woman in the audience said she felt "warm" while watching him breathe. Pretty soon, people all over the room were one-upping each other, each claiming a groovier experience than the last. The yogi helped them out, suggesting that while he breathed, "waves of energy" may have emanated from him and moved through the crowd. By the end of this weird little episode, people were actually beginning to claim out-of-body experiences.

I'm not making this shit up.

Now, these were fairly ordinary people, most of whom probably had dinner before attending and a good sleep the night before. If the holy man had an opportunity to use some classic mind control techniques—deprive the audience of sleep and food, for example—he probably could have gotten them to convince themselves he'd flown around the room on a magic carpet.

Heck, if he'd wanted to, I'd bet he could have gotten them to convince each other they could justifiably invade a Middle Eastern country.

This transition will be an abrupt one. I apologize. You see, when I started writing this column, we were not yet (officially) at war in Iraq. I was planning to talk about that dramatic example of groupthink, then draw parallels between the relatively harmless little mind control exercise I'd witnessed and a much more sinister one, perpetuated by our own leadership as we hung on the border of Iraq, waiting for the missiles to fly and the tanks to roll.

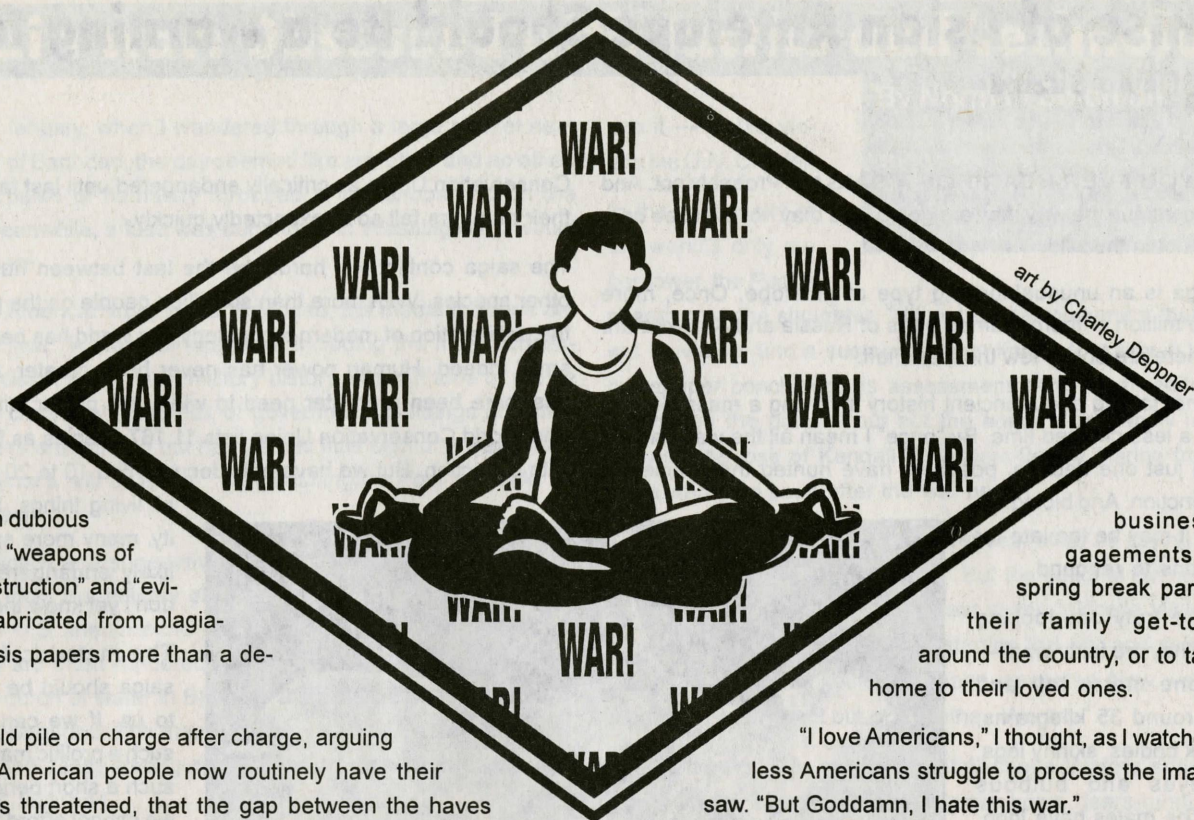
I was going to make a lot of jokes poking fun at human foibles, laughing at how Americans have allowed themselves to be sold on "Operation Iraqi Freedom," and even laughing at the incongruous "title" of this war. "I admit, it sounds less Madison Avenue than 'Desert Storm' or 'Desert Shield,'" I would write, "but the idea that we're going to 'liberate' people by bombing the shit out of their country is a public relations maneuver of unexcelled absurdity."

I could still do that, I suppose. But my heart's just not in it.

I was going to talk about how the professor that set up the yogi's visit had told me later, "These guys are all part holy-man and part con-man." And I was going to make some clever comments about Hindu holy men and American Presidents.

I still could, I guess. But my heart's not in that, either.

I thought I might present a hypothetical scenario in which other countries ganged up against us. Some world leaders are accusing ours of felonious intent, you know. These world leaders could probably build a case—maybe not a great case, but a convincing one to those who already want to believe—that our government is run by a cruel madman who managed to seize power through a dubious election. They could add that America is a danger to the world—that we thumbed our nose at the international community over global warming, for example—and that America has tried to justify the invasion of another country and overthrow of its govern-



ment with dubious claims of "weapons of mass destruction" and "evidence" fabricated from plagiarized thesis papers more than a decade old.

They could pile on charge after charge, arguing that the American people now routinely have their civil rights threatened, that the gap between the haves and have-nots grows larger by the day as those at the top amass more wealth at the expense of those at the bottom, that the people of our country have lost control of our government, our natural resources, and our environment.

I would probably have mentioned how Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Stalin had all "liberated" people by killing a bunch of them. I'm not sure exactly how far out on a limb I'd have gone—I was only half-finished with the column, so hadn't completely organized all my thoughts—but I was thinking I might suggest we impeach the President and about 52 percent of Congress. Or I might have suggested we all work our asses off to ensure that, at the next available opportunity, they get voted so far out of office that none could get elected Dogcatcher in Podunk.

But my heart's just not in that, now.

You see, I interrupted my composition of this column by leaving Florida for a family get-together in Texas. I would leave behind a Bush state, one in which southern slash pines struggle out of the soil to shade the palmetto scrub with their anemic branches and wispy needles. I would fly into the heart of another, one in which stunted, bony mesquite trees hang buzzard-like over the thick carpet of prickly pear cactus that clings tenaciously to the hard red clay. Each is beautiful in its own stark, naked way.

I was en route to the airport when the announcement came that the invasion of Iraq had officially begun. Hours later, I would sit in an airport watching the first war footage on CNN. I would share that experience with a number of other travelers who endured layovers while waiting to board airliners that would take them to their

business engagements, their spring break parties, and their family get-togethers around the country, or to take them home to their loved ones.

"I love Americans," I thought, as I watched countless Americans struggle to process the images they saw. "But Goddamn, I hate this war."

Later, I drove along a midwest Texas highway into a barbed-wire laced countryside. A late winter front had moved through, and an uncharacteristic mist shrouded the mesas that rose from the usually sere, griddle-flat landscape. The sun broke through the haze; it gilded the timeworn edges of the mesas and made the dewdrops that hung on the barbed wire glisten like rough-cut diamonds. A rust-red pickup crawled slowly down a farm road in the distance.

"Goddamn, I love this country," I thought.

I turned off the radio, shutting off news of the war, but the fighting kept playing in my mind. And it dawned on me: I sincerely hope my opinion of this war is wrong.

I got out of the car in a little town called Buffalo Gap and stood by the barbed wire facing the distant mesas. I took a deep breath and exhaled slowly, quietly singing "Om" to myself while searching the vast flatness for the ghosts of the buffalo that once grazed there. And I spoke softly to any god that might be listening.

I prayed that our armies are in Iraq for all the reasons the President says, not for the more cynical reasons I suspect. I prayed that we'll win like he says we will and that the war will end soon with few casualties and few civilian deaths—and not turn out, as I expect it will, to be merely one in a series of battles.

And I prayed that when all the chips are counted, America's cause will have been proved right and just, and I'll turn out to have been just another a paranoid idiot. God help us if I don't. ❧

Morris Sullivan is a freelance writer living in DeLand, Florida.

Demise of Asian Antelope Should Be a Warning to Us

By Dr. David Suzuki

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A SAIGA? Probably not. And if things continue the way they are going, you may not ever see one. At least, not in the wild.

The saiga is an unusual-looking type of antelope. Once, more than one million of them roamed parts of Russia and Kazakhstan. Today, there are only a few thousand left.

But I'm not talking about ancient history involving a mass slaughter from a less-civilized time. By "once" I mean all the way back in 1993. In just one decade, poachers have hunted the species to near extinction. And biologists say that it may be too late for populations to rebound.

Saiga are truly odd-looking beasts. They are fairly small—about one metre tall and weigh around 35 kilograms, with thick bodies, skinny legs, huge eyes and bulbous noses. The males have long, ringed horns, which sell for upwards of \$150 per kilogram in China, where they are valued for use in traditional medicines. Prices like these attract poachers from all over Asia to the Russian steppe grasslands, where the antelope roam in herds.

In the past, saiga were hunted extensively for their meat and skins, but populations remained stable because the animals reproduce rapidly. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, vast areas of Asia were opened up, enabling poaching gangs to roam freely and hunt from vehicles using high-powered rifles. Male saiga have been specifically targeted for their horns. Just 10 years ago, herds of saiga blackened areas of Central Kazakhstan. Today, according to biologists cited in *New Scientist*, there are less than 4,000 left in this area, and they are all female. Unless males are brought in from elsewhere, these herds will soon disappear altogether.

Saving this antelope will be a huge challenge. The saiga isn't exactly a poster child for an endangered species campaign. Most people have never heard of them and they aren't the most beautiful creatures in the world. They weren't even red-listed by the World

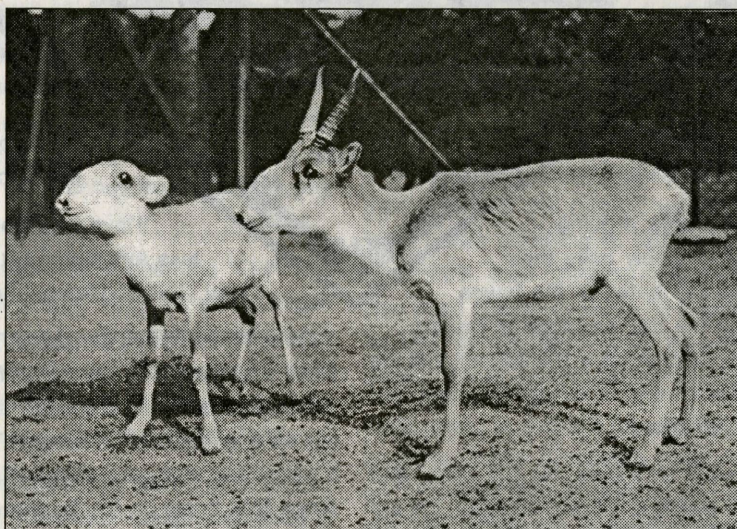
Conservation Union as critically endangered until last fall because their numbers fell so unexpectedly quickly.

The saiga conflict will hardly be the last between humans and other species. With more than six billion people on the planet and the proliferation of modern technology, the world has become very small indeed. Human power has never been greater. And never has there been a greater need to wield this power with caution. The World Conservation Union lists 11,167 species as threatened with extinction. But we have only documented 10 to 20 percent of

all living things. So in reality, many more species are likely endangered, but we don't yet know they exist!

The meteoric fall of the saiga should be a warning to us. If we can decimate such a prolific mammal over such a short period of time, we cannot afford to become complacent about any species. So when countries like Japan or Norway say that we should allow commercial whaling, or when provinces like British Columbia say that hunting grizzly bears for sport is fine because the province has a general idea of how many bears are left, the public should be very concerned. These days, it doesn't take long for a species to go from plentiful to critical.

We may like to think that the slaughter of an animal on a massive scale is the kind of thing that occurred in the past, when the world was less civilized and we didn't know any better. But the saiga have disappeared right under our noses in modern times. Our technologies and our sheer numbers have made us incredibly powerful, but clearly we have a lot of growing up to do. ❧



We may like to think that the slaughter of an animal on a massive scale is the kind of thing that occurred in the past, when the world was less civilized and we didn't know any better. But the saiga (pictured above) have disappeared right under our noses in modern times.

David T. Suzuki PhD, the Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org), is an award-winning scientist, environmentalist and broadcaster. The author of more than 30 books, David Suzuki is recognized as a world leader in sustainable ecology.

Media War: Obsessed with Tactics and Technology

By Norman Solomon

Norman Solomon is executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, a nationwide consortium of public-policy. His latest book, "Target Iraq: What The News Media Didn't Tell You," will be out in February. His syndicated column focuses on media and politics.

This past January, when I wandered through a large market near the center of Baghdad, the day seemed like any other and no other. A vibrant pulse of humanity throbbed in the shops and on the streets. Meanwhile, a fuse was burning; lit in Washington, it would explode here.

Now, with American troops near Baghdad, the media fixations are largely tactical. "A week of airstrikes, including the most concentrated precision hits in U.S. military history, has left tons of rubble and deep craters at hundreds of government buildings and military facilities around Iraq but has yielded little sign of a weakening in the regime's will to resist," the *Washington Post* reported on Wednesday.

Shrewd tactics and superlative technology were supposed to do the grisly trick. But military difficulties have set off warning bells inside the U.S. media echo chamber. In contrast, humanitarian calamities are often rendered as PR problems, whether the subject is the cutoff of water in Basra or the missiles that kill noncombatants in Baghdad: The main concern is apt to be that extensive suffering and death among civilians would make the "coalition of the willing" look bad.

But in spite of all the public-relations efforts on behalf of this invasion, the military forces of Washington and London remain a coalition for the killing of Iraqi people who get in the way of the righteous juggernaut. Despite the prevalent media fixations, the great moral questions about this war have not been settled — on the contrary, they intensify with each passing day — no matter what gets onto TV screens and front pages.

When U.S. missiles exploded at Iraqi government broadcast facilities in late March, it was a move to silence a regime that had been gaining ground in the propaganda struggle. Throughout the months of faux "diplomacy" and the first days of invading Iraq, the governments led by George W. Bush and Tony Blair had managed to do the nearly impossible — make themselves look even more mendacious than the bloody dictator Saddam Hussein.

On the home front, most U.S. news outlets are worshipping the nation's high-tech arsenal. It was routine one day in late March when the *Washington Post* printed a large color diagram under the headline "A Rugged Bird." Unrelated to ornithology, the diagram annotated key features of the AH-64 Apache — not a bird but a helicopter that excels as a killing machine.

We're supposed to adore the Pentagon's prowess; the deadlier the better. Transfixed with tactical maneuvers and overall strategies inside Iraq, media outlets rarely mention that this entire war by the U.S. government and its British accomplice is a flagrant violation of international law. Only days before the United States launched the attack, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said that the invasion — lacking a new Security Council resolution to autho-

rize it — would violate the U.N. Charter.

In the capital city of the world's only superpower, the *Post* is

cheering on the slaughter. "Ultimately the monument that matters will be victory and a sustained commitment to a rebuilt Iraq," the newspaper concluded. Its assessment came in an editorial that mentioned the pain — but not the anger — of family members grieving the loss of Kendall D. Waters-Bey, a Marine from Baltimore who died soon after the war began.

The *Post's* editorial quoted the bereaved father as saying that "the word 'sorrow' cannot fill my pain." But the editorial did not include a word from the dead man's oldest sister, Michelle Waters, who faulted the U.S. government for starting the war and said: "It's all for nothing. That war could have been prevented. Now, we're out of a brother. Bush is not out of a brother. We are."

The *Baltimore Sun* reported that Michelle Waters spoke those words "in the living room of the family home, tears running down her cheeks."

A week into this war, CNN's White House correspondent John King was in sync with many other journalists as he noted criticisms of the administration's "war strategy." The media anxiety level has been rising, but the voiced concerns are overwhelmingly about tactics. A military triumph may not be so easy after all.

Today, I took another look at quotations that I'd jotted at meetings with Iraqi officials during visits to Baghdad last fall and winter. (The quotes are included in *Target Iraq: What the News Media Didn't Tell You*, a book I co-authored with foreign correspondent Reese Erlich.)

In mid-September, the elderly speaker of Iraq's national assembly, Saadoun Hammadi, told our delegation of Americans led by Rep. Nick Rahall: "The U.S. administration is now speaking war. We are not going to turn the other cheek. We are going to fight. Not only our armed forces will fight. Our people will fight."

Three months later, at a Dec. 14 meeting, Iraq's deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz said: "Hundreds of thousands of people are going to die, including Americans — because if they want to take over oil in Iraq, they have to fight for it, not by missiles and by airplanes ... they have to bring troops and fight the Iraqi people and the Iraqi army. And that will be costly."

The fuse lit in Washington is now burning in Baghdad. Our tax dollars are incinerating Iraqi troops and civilians.

No matter how long this war takes, it is profoundly wrong. ◀◀



Worse Things

SELLING A WAR IS A VERY DIFFICULT PROPOSITION. OUR COUNTRY'S PUSH TOWARD WAR IN IRAQ HAS BEEN SOLD TO US, THROUGH VARIOUS SOURCES, WITH A THREE-PRONGED ARGUMENT.

The first argument was to address Iraq's alleged pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, illegal under United Nations resolutions. Fine—I'll buy that, if it ever gets proven. As of this writing, it hasn't, but I'll keep an open mind.

The second argument was Iraq's connections with terrorist organizations. Maybe I'll buy that too, if it comes to be proven as well. I'm guessing that Iraq is probably connected to terrorism in much the same way that the state of Washington is connected to the proliferation of Microsoft Windows.

The third argument, and most troublesome to me, was the notion that freeing the people of Iraq from a tyrannous dictator was the absolute right thing to do; that this war was a shining example of American leadership in combating evils of the world. We will bring Jeffersonian democracy to a people who have never known freedom.

Is this a signal that America is becoming an empire, preparing to

conquer and impose our form of government on the globe, or is this just an idealistic pep rally aimed at drumming up moral support for the war when tangible reasons fall utterly short in their persuasion?

Let's just assume for a moment that liberating Iraq from its oppressive regime is our reason for going in. Already we have proven that our moral duties are at best selective, as this nation has allowed too many corrupt regimes to exist for far too long and allowed too many tremendous atrocities to occur before our very eyes. Trouble spots around the world are many and varied, with myriad moral causes to be fought. But which ones will we choose in the future? Which ones are being chosen now?

Central Africa is the worst hellhole on earth, where conditions are far, far more horrific than life in Iraq, and they have been for decades. Consider the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda in 1994. The US and UN did next to nothing to stop the murder of as many as 800,000 people by Hutu extremists that April, yet a few years later we bombed Yugoslavia for a month after years of ethnic cleansing on a similar scale.

In the Congo, about 12,000 children are serving as soldiers in a Civil War that broke out in 1996 after the fall of Zaire and dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Troops supported by several nations continue to fight in this war. At least 50 percent of soldiers in the Congo, Malawi, Uganda, Angola, and Zimbabwe are HIV-posi-

As soon as a country starts basing its foreign policy on a moral reshaping of the world, it has entered the transitional zone towards the realm of fascism.

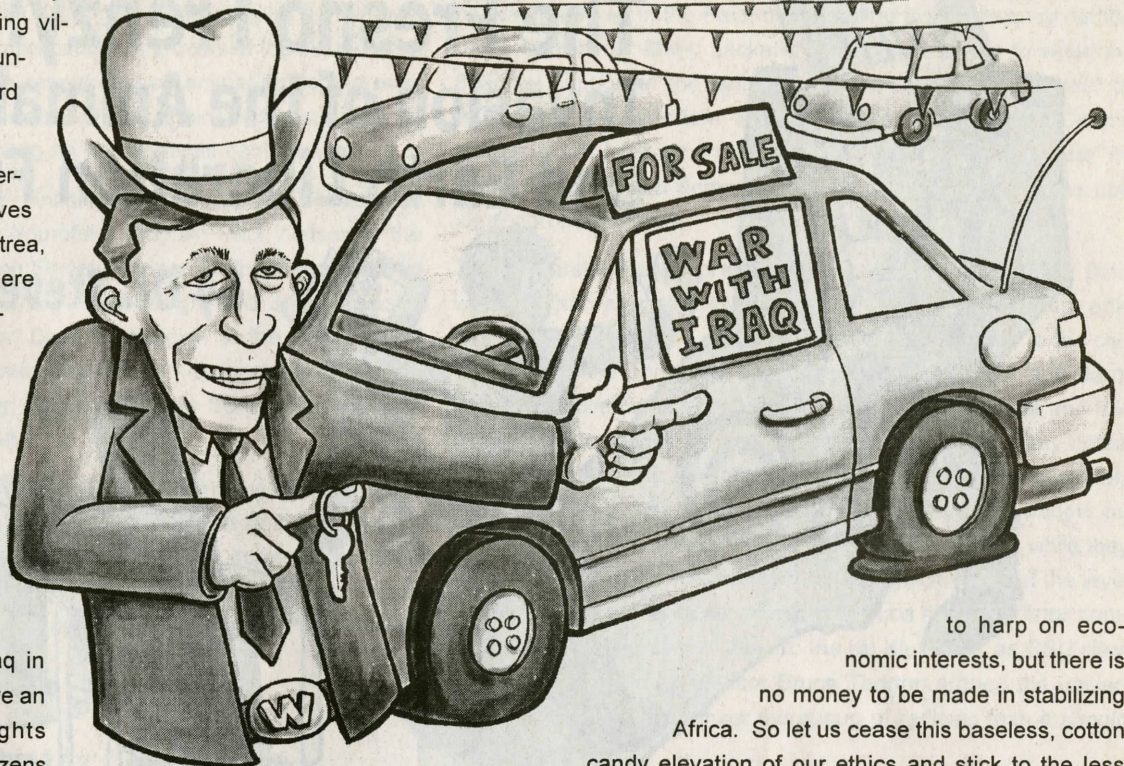
tive, and they roam the countryside indiscriminately raping village folk, who are often uneducated and cannot afford clothes.

Meanwhile, in the war on terror, we are allying ourselves with countries such as Eritrea, seeking to base troops there for operations in the region. It is a country that is just emerging from a war with Ethiopia, and which has not allowed private publications to exist since September 2001. In fact, a recent survey by Reporters Without Borders ranked Eritrea *below* Iraq in press freedom. They have an appalling human rights record, detaining their citizens for legitimate dissent.

When we start using language about moral obligations to other nations' people, we don't just make ourselves feel good about our perceived selflessness, we make other countries feel really scared of it. As soon as a country starts basing its foreign policy on a moral reshaping of the world (which we must do since we have no large evil like the Soviet Union to combat anymore), it has entered the transitional zone towards the realm of fascism. It's a dirty, dirty word, but if America becomes the savior and central authority of the nations we "liberate," we will be fascists—not in terms of individual leadership, but of other states' role in our affairs. We may mean well, but we have a thoroughly vile lack of consistency in our arguments and actions, which should lead any thinking person to question our motives.

Unless, of course, our selective moral judgments have more to do with economics and the stability of a region we depend on. I hate

art by Eric Spittler



to harp on economic interests, but there is no money to be made in stabilizing Africa. So let us cease this baseless, cotton candy elevation of our ethics and stick to the less abstract reasons for engaging in this conflict, because we have scarcely a leg to stand on.

One thing will be curious—I wonder how many yellow ribbons and American flags people are going to adorn their cars with once this war gets underway. Difficult to say, but I'm betting not nearly as many as the last time we did this. ❧

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The Fresno Frenzy: Invasion of the Animal and Earth Liberation Fronts

by Dr. Steven Best

art by Eric Spitler

FLYING OVER FRESNO, I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW OF THE AIRPLANE and saw a landscape littered with factory farm buildings that housed thousands of animals in complete misery, confined in cramped cages and pens until they were ready for slaughter. I got a foreboding feeling about the setting in which I was about to land.

I was en route to an unprecedented conference called "Revolutionary Environmentalism," held at the California State University, Fresno (CSU). It brought together notorious animal rights and environmental activists that, at one time or another, had been arrested for direct action and acts of animal liberation and property destruction, along with noted academics who write about and support this controversial aspect of the animal rights and environmental movements.

The implicit understanding of "revolutionary" involved (1) a critique of the capitalist system and its privileging of profit over all other values; (2) opposition to the Western worldview of anthropocentrism which disconnects human beings from nature and views the natural world as resources for human consumption; (3) direct action tactics that bypass the political process as an ineffectual means of change, that practice civil disobedience and lawbreaking, and that sometimes destroy the property of individuals or industries that harm animals or degrade nature.

ORGANIZED BY POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR MARK SOMMA, CSU approved hosting this provocative and singular conference. Rarely do universities support such controversial topics, but CSU approval was all the more remarkable as animal rights and environmental activists have declared war against interests such as agribusiness that are among its key financial contributors.

In attendance were former Animal Liberation Front (ALF) activists Rod Coronado and Gary Yourofsky; Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepard Conservation Society; former Earth Liberation Front (ELF) spokespersons Craig Rosebaugh and James Leslie Pickering; Dr. Bron Taylor, Chair of Religion at the University of Florida; Dr. Rik Scarce from Science and Technology Studies at Michigan State University; faculty members from various departments at CSU; and myself.

During a time when the Bush administration put the nation on "high" alert for terrorist attacks, the conference brought together representatives from the FBI's most wanted "domestic terrorist" groups—the ALF and ELF—and many others to discuss radical environmentalism and direct action. The stage was set for high drama.

An Irate Industry

The passion play started in December 2001 when the Center For Consumer Freedom (CCF), a conservative group representing restaurant and tavern owners, got wind of the conference and put notice of it on their site with an article entitled "Legitimizing the Lunatics." Setting the precedent for conservative reaction, they vilified the conference participants and condemned CSU for allowing "criminals" and "eco-terrorists" on their campus, thereby allegedly justifying their cause. In a case study of how industry propaganda and disinformation machines operate, CCF whipped up a climate of fear and hysteria by alerting other interest groups around the country about the event. CCF misrepresented university motives, absurdly exaggerated the danger of violence, and caricatured conference participants in crude terms while never questioning the impact of industry on animals and the earth.

Needless to say, the Fresno agribusiness community was outraged that the university they contributed money to would host a cadre of people militantly opposed to their business and values. Weeks before it happened, the conference dominated Fresno media and talk radio stations. People throughout the university and community debated it with great intensity, although with precious little information about direct action movements. Symptomatic of the paranoia hovering over Fresno as thick as its deadly fog of air pollution, car dealers hired extra security out of fear that hoards of black-clothed, balaclava-wearing thugs would pounce on their SUV lots in pre-dawn raids, as in fact the ELF has done in other states.

Prominent among the mob of detractors was John Harris, owner

of one of the largest beef ranches in the San Joaquin Valley. Harris penned an op-ed in the Fresno Bee calling the conference participants "terrorists." Many backers of CSU threatened to withdraw financial support in the belief that the university "sponsored" or "supported" eco-terrorism. Republican California Senator Dennis Hollingsworth joined the chorus of those decrying the "waste" of taxpayer money and demanding reducing state funds to the university proportionately.

The university issued press releases and statements on their web site that rejected these charges and insisted they were only hosting a timely debate about issues that clearly relate to the critics. Wisely, the university acknowledged that animal and earth liberation movements were part of a new political culture and it is better to try to understand rather than ignore them. Many critics were not convinced, and felt that the university was unavoidably validating repugnant radical viewpoints. These same people insisted that they are not opponents of free speech rights, while they made a convenient exception to the rule. Symptomatic of the level of bias, a CSU student interviewed in the *Los Angeles Times* compared the conference members to the Ku Klux Klan, as CSU classics and humanities professor Bruce Thorton argued the university should no more sponsor this group of radicals than it should child molesters.

Other critics proclaimed the conference was rigged unfairly to advance a one-sided agenda without opposing voices. In fact, agribusiness interests were invited to speak but declined the offer. Moreover, the charge of bias is absurd because the conference was the one time university and community members could hear alternative viewpoints rather than the agribusiness propaganda that dominates Fresno. The conference, in other words, was the balance critics claimed was lacking.

Free Speech – Except For You

Putting aside invidious comparisons with activists who espouse compassion, non-violence, and anti-discriminatory views of any kind, does not even the KKK have a right to speak? Is not the university the most appropriate forum for debating controversial issues? Does truth not emerge through the clash of opposing positions? Are direct action tactics and the new liberation movements not among the urgent issues of the day that deserve a public airing? Is it wrong to discuss what is happening to animals and the environment in an era of intense development of the natural world and mass mechanization? Should students be "protected" from controversial views or do they need to hear them? Can they not make up their own minds, or do they need the paternalism of the state patriarchs?

The greater harm is not in having the debate, but in silencing it. The representatives of the agricultural industry and their conspirators showed themselves to be cowards, morally bankrupt, devoid

of respect for truth and democracy, and shameless peddlers of propaganda. The university, conversely, was courageous as it withstood attacks from ardent supporters, from other members of the faculty and the community, and from the state government. If nothing else, the university gave local business interests the opportunity to meet and better understand their enemy.

Most of the conference was closed to the non-university community in order to prevent disruption and guarantee the kind of sober dialogue the organizers and participants sought. Thus, conference participants spoke to students and faculty in classes, seminars, and panel discussions. The main event, an evening panel open to anyone in the community with a ticket, drew 800 people. Like the classroom visits and the day panels, the audience response was overwhelmingly positive.

Instead of being bombarded with one-sided opinions, vilifications, slander, and distortion of the highest order—as they were in the weeks before the conference—thousands of members of the university and community had their first opportunity to hear radical activists and academics represent their views in their own words and in a full context. As the conference participants spoke to classes throughout the university and presented their views in numerous panels and a huge public forum, they had the opportunity to explain the legitimacy and need for direct action tactics, and to discuss the origins, motivations, and goals of the new liberation movements.

Whatever audience members concluded, it was obvious that these "lunatics" are intelligent, aware, and compassionate people who lost their government trust blinders for good reason. They are people committed to the defense of the natural and social worlds against the ever-escalating assault of industries on the forests, rivers, wilderness, and animals, and their radicalism emerged organically out of their political experience. In effect, radicals are products of the state that condemns them, for if government enforced laws and protected citizens, and if industries were not allowed "ownership" rights over animals and the environment, there would be no need for an ALF, ELF, and their academic supporters.

Will Monkeywrench For Nature

Throughout the event, the activists and academics challenged the charge that destroying property is violence by insisting that violence can only be committed against sentient beings and not objects. The ALF and ELF are deeply committed to principles of non-violence and see themselves as adhering to the peaceful direct action traditions of Gandhi and King. In the history of ALF and ELF actions, no human being has ever been injured or killed, whereas activists have been assaulted and killed by industry goons and the state. Subsequently, panelists rejected the charge that they are "terrorists" as an Orwellian reversal of the truth. ALF and ELF activists harm no one and protect animals and the environment from

severe harm; conversely, industries torture and kill billions of animals as they devastate ecosystems throughout the planet. Thus, who are the real terrorists?

Key questions emerged throughout the conference: who are the ALF and ELF and why do they exist? Do they play a positive or negative role in the struggles to protect the natural world? Why do they feel it is necessary to break laws? Can no real and enduring progress be gained through legislation? Are property destruction and arson acceptable tactics? What role do radical academics play in the new liberation movement and how should activists and academics relate?

The new liberation movements are relatively young, having emerged in the late 1970s (the ALF), the early 1980s (Earth First!), and the 1990s (the ELF). In strong terms, activists explained that they have found it necessary to work outside the legal system and flout its laws, because the U.S. government is thoroughly corrupt in its representation of powerful corporate interests over the people. Activists have no trust in the state, and they described how, in cases such as the Animal Welfare Act, laws serve only to regulate exploitation and violence, or to distract attention from the fact that the state serves the interests of industries. Known for sinking and ramming whaling ships, Paul Watson explained that he does not break laws; rather he upholds international treaties supposed to protect whales and other animals but which in fact are not enforced.

Activists did not block the possibility of others making useful reforms within the state. The Humane Society of the United States, for example, has been the driving force behind creating special elections that bypass the influence of industries on governments and allow citizens themselves to pass laws against various forms of animal cruelty. But the direct action activists emphasized how difficult it is to make progressive laws, how poorly they are enforced, and how they are constantly rewritten and watered down through industry pressure on government. In an extreme situation where after decades of hard work by animal rights and environmental groups ever more animals are being killed and abused and the destruction of the earth advances rapidly, activists feel that "extreme" measures are needed to defend the earth and its animal species from attack.

Liberation: Coming to a Town Near You

While the country feared another attack from the Al Qaeda and remained on high alert status, activists and academics gathered peacefully to talk about the crisis in the natural world. Although they provoked anger with many, the conference members had a deep and lasting impact on many students who for the first time heard radical viewpoints instead of industry propaganda. Along with the outrage, there was also appreciation for alternative perspectives

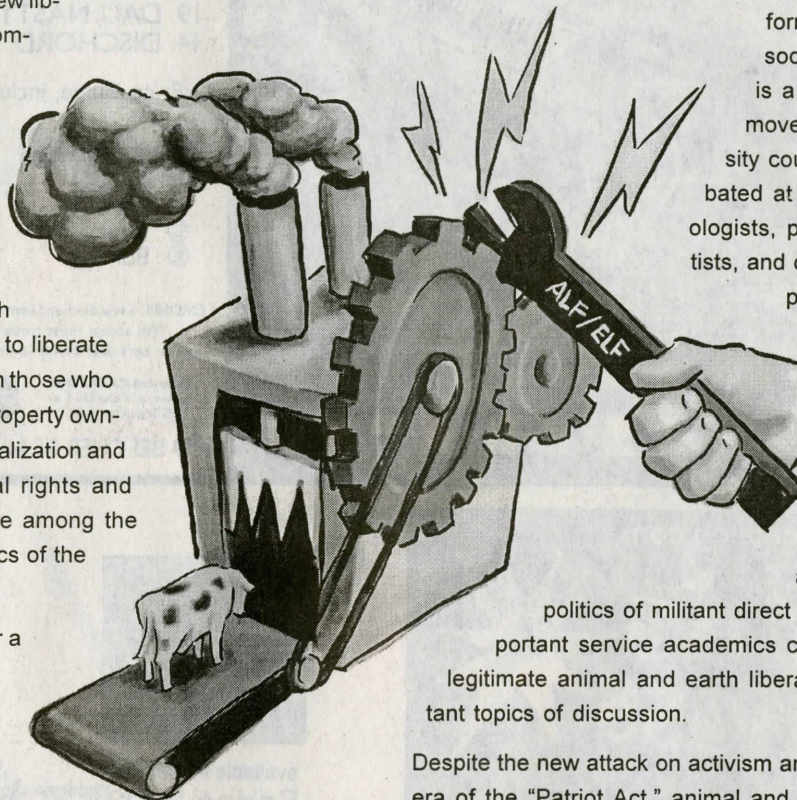
and challenges to the state, capitalism, and the Western anthropocentric mindset that views the natural world as nothing but resources for human beings to use as they see fit.

Clearly, this band of "eco-terrorists" is no threat to national security, although the movements they represent or defend do pose serious threats to industries that exploit animals and the earth. The new liberation movements can be compared to the Black Panthers of the 1960s to the degree that mainstream thinking frames them as radical, extreme, and violent. Or, they can be likened to the abolitionist movement of the nineteenth century insofar as they seek to liberate and protect a living world from those who illegitimately claim rights of property ownership over it. Along with globalization and genetic engineering, animal rights and radical environmentalism are among the most urgent and heated topics of the day.

Flushed with excitement over a successful and historically significant education forum, I wondered about its long-term impact. Would there be more or less free speech at Fresno in the future?

Can the spark of the conference ignite activity among an otherwise passive student body and dormant campus? Was the door opened to other radical viewpoints, or would there be a strong reaction and efforts to reindoctrinate the community with agribusiness propaganda? Can there be more conferences like this, or was it a singular event, both in terms of bringing together a unique combination of individuals and getting a university to host and fund it? (In fact, since the Fresno conference, a conference of radical environmental activists was featured at Rice University in Houston, Texas, and provoked similar ire against the university for using tax dollars to sponsor "eco-terrorists." Moreover, another university-sponsored conference of radical activists and academics is being planned for Spring 2004 around the publication of the forthcoming book, *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals*, co-edited by Tony Nocella and myself.)

ALF and ELF activists harm no one and protect animals and the environment from severe harm; conversely, industries torture and kill billions of animals as they devastate ecosystems throughout the planet. Thus, who are the real terrorists?



Unfortunately, one of the main issues of the conference, the relation between radical academics and activists, was never engaged. Academics certainly appreciate the activists, but I heard anti-theory/academic biases voiced on occasion by some activists. Whether appreciated by all or not, it was important that academics were present to speak a different discourse informed by their study of history, sociology, and philosophy. There is a need for the new liberation movements to be taught in university courses; to be studied and debated at an academic level by sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, and others; and to be involved in public debates. While many radical academics are deeply involved in activist causes, teaching and writing can be important modes of activism. Educating students and the public about the history, ethics, and

politics of militant direct action movements is an important service academics can perform as they help to legitimate animal and earth liberation as serious and important topics of discussion.

Despite the new attack on activism and constitutional rights in the era of the "Patriot Act," animal and earth liberation movements continue to wage war against the destructive planetary machine of capitalism. As capitalist industries destroy ever more human and animal life and devour the earth, opposition movements to this genocide and ecocide will and must escalate. As they do, and become ever more serious threats to industries, the state will fight back with ferocity, as it is doing currently through the Patriot Act and its even more repressive sequel soon to debut in our land, Patriot Act 2, or the "Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003."

One can only hope that the coming struggles will not be violent, but history shows that when the stakes are this high, moderation is not always exercised. ❧

*Dr. Steven Best is Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy at the Univ. of Texas, El Paso. He has published numerous books and articles on the topics of social theory, cultural studies, science and technology, and postmodernism. His next book will be *Moral Progress and Animal Rights: The Struggle For Human Evolution*. Some of his writings are posted at <http://utminers.utep.edu/best/>*



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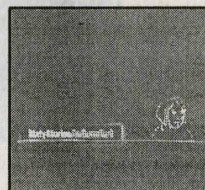
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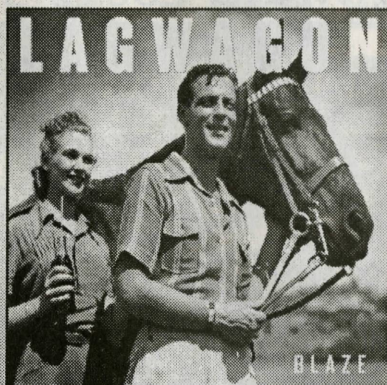
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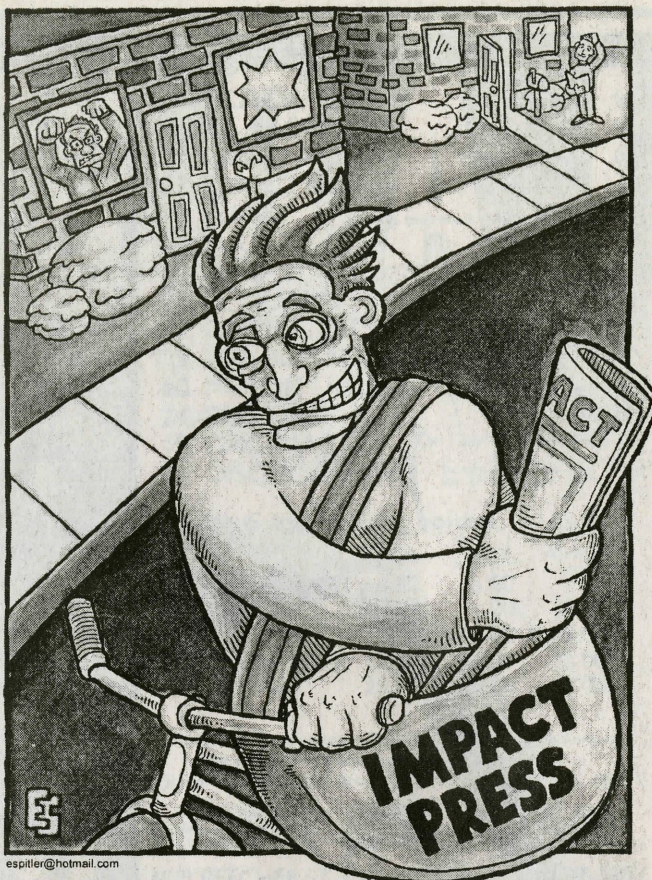
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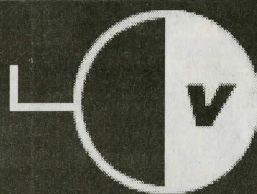
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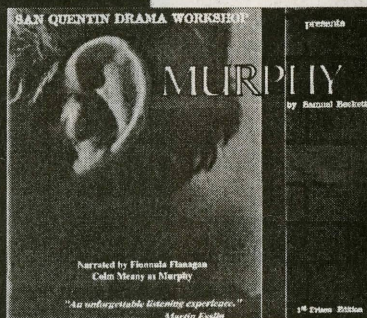


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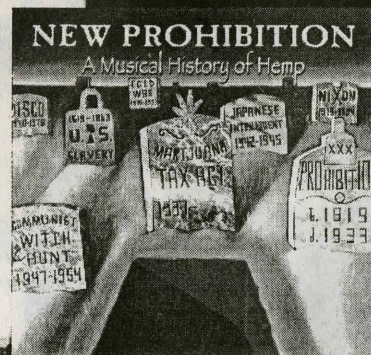
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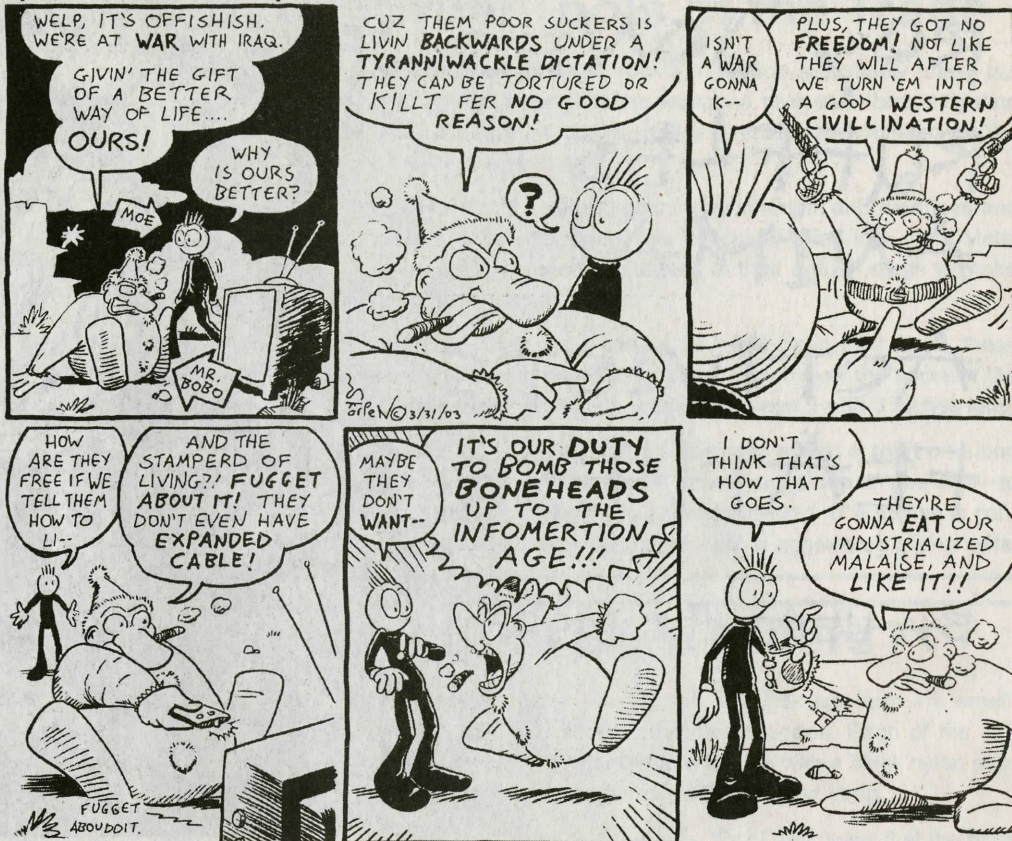
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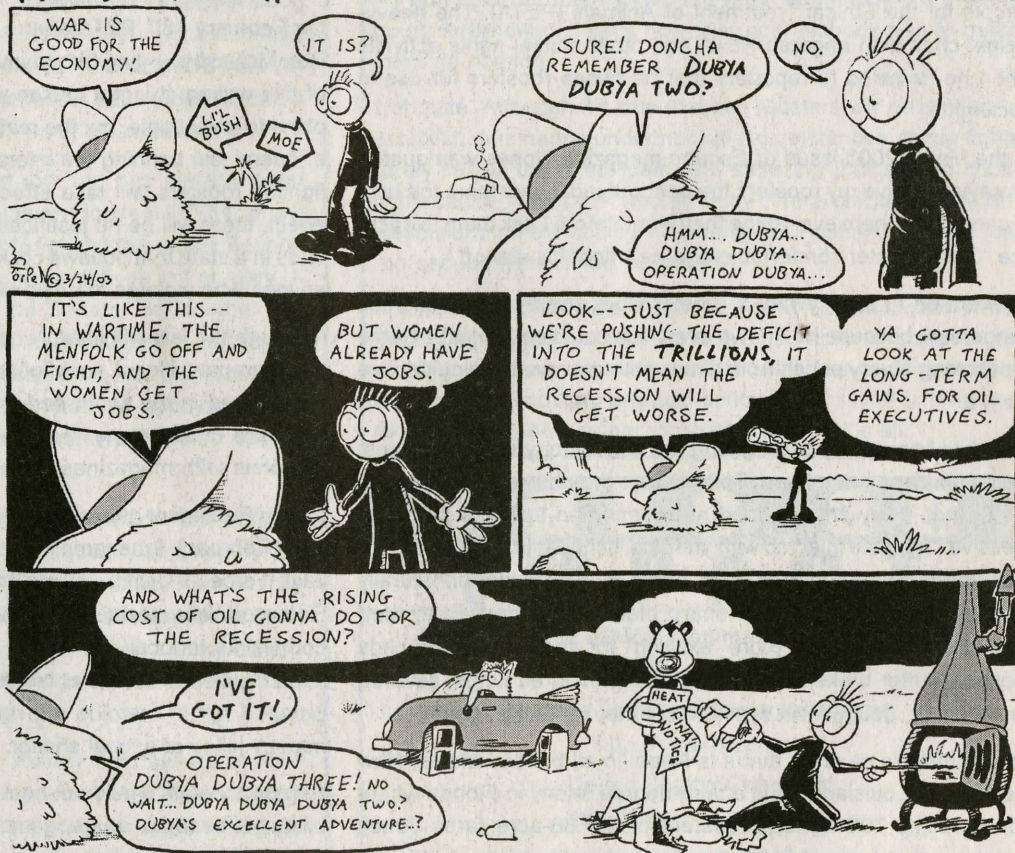
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ROY JONES JR. RUFFLES ANIMAL ACTIVISTS' FEATHERS

BY HEATHER MOORE



art by Greg Rebis

Boxer Roy Jones Jr. is up against his toughest opponent ever—People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The heavyweight champion angered PETA and other animal rights activists when he revealed to reporters that he raises roosters for use in cockfights.

In the March 2003 issue of *Esquire* magazine, Jones was quoted as saying, "I give my roosters the best of food. I give them the best of care. I give them everything they want before I ask them to sacrifice. Get a rooster comfortable and he'll fight his ass off."

He went on to say, "When a rooster's got one eye, he becomes dangerous, because he knows every lick could be his last... Same with boxing. Every punch from a man with one eye is going to have kill in it."

But while boxing and cockfighting are both bloody and dangerous, the comparison ends there. Boxers have the choice to fight; roosters do not. They are confined and tormented to make them aggressive. They are injected with steroids, stimulants such as strychnine and testosterone, and other drugs to make them unnaturally muscular and strong. Razor-sharp blades are attached to their legs to make the fights more "exciting" for spectators. The birds routinely suffer broken wings and legs, punctured lungs, severed spinal cords, gouged-out eyes, and, if they're "lucky," death.

Cockfighting is so cruel that it is illegal in all but two states, New Mexico and Louisiana. It is a third-degree felony in Florida where Jones raises 700 fighting roosters on an 88-acre farm. Jones maintains that he only fights the roosters in Louisiana and is not

guilty of any illegal actions.

On February 18th, PETA sent a letter to Escambia County Sheriff Ron McNesby, urging him to investigate Jones' dubious claim. As of this writing, it is not known whether or not the sheriff has any plans to investigate, but the matter will soon be irrelevant because a federal law banning the interstate and international transport of fighting roosters will take effect in May. Once the law goes into effect, there will be no justification for anyone to possess fighting birds in a state that outlaws cockfighting. The maximum penalty for anyone who violates the new law will be \$15,000 per bird.

Although the law will sharply hamper cockfighters, it is unlikely to stop rampant illegal cockfighting altogether. The blood sport is widespread in the south and the southwest, where thousands of birds are raised every year. It is a bustling underworld industry, complete with magazines, training paraphernalia, and web sites.

Law enforcement officials frequently break up illegal cockfights. In early February, for example, the Mendocino County Major Crimes Task Force in California was forced to remove 50 roosters from Redwood Valley resident Ciro Ruiz's property after neighbors made complaints to local authorities. Ruiz was taken to jail because a stolen gun was found at his residence. The roosters had been pumped full of steroids and trained to fight and had to be humanely killed at a local shelter.

Seizing roosters would not normally be the Task Force's responsibility, but because drugs, gambling, and weapons are also associated with cockfighting, the job often falls to them. According to

Task Force commander Bob Nishiyama, "It's been our experience that a lot of the people who are involved with raising fighting roosters are also involved in the drug trade." It's not only the people who raise and fight the roosters, but also the people who bet on them. "It's a big money sport," says Nishiyama, who reasoned that the money has to come from somewhere.

Gambling and firearms are the norm at cockfights because of the large amounts of cash present. Young children often attend cockfights. The exposure to blood sports can promote insensitivity to animal suffering and an enthusiasm for violence.

Cockfighting needs to be stopped for everyone's sake—not just the cocks'. Concerned residents of Louisiana and New Mexico can urge their legislators to ban cockfighting and citizens in other states should alert the local police and animal control if they suspect illegal fights are taking place. Cockfighting rings may not always be easy to infiltrate, but when people realize that the "sport" is nothing more than a barbaric blood bath, they'll know to avoid it in the first place. Then roosters will really have something to crow about. ❧

Heather Moore is a staff writer for People For The Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and a regular contributor to IMPACT press.

Upset in Oklahoma

Until recently, cockfighting had been legal in Oklahoma, but caring Oklahomans voted to ban the blood sport in the November 2002 elections. That ban, however, is currently in limbo due to a legal battle to challenge the referendum. Even though the ban was approved 55 percent to 45 percent, it was rejected by 57 of the state's 77 counties. A state judge placed a temporary injunction on enforcement of the new law.

Legislation designed to weaken the ban has already been introduced in the Oklahoma legislature. House Bill 1784, which seeks to reduce the penalty for cockfighting to a misdemeanor, already passed the House of Representatives in February. A similar bill, 835, is currently in the Senate. Yet another bill, Senate Bill 829, would allow individual counties to determine whether to uphold the ban. Unless caring Oklahomans urge their state representatives and senators to oppose Senate Bill 835 and Senate Bill 829, the ban they worked so hard to pass may be over before it even starts.

A battle to ban cockfighting is also underway in New Mexico. The day after a bill to ban the blood sport was killed by the Senate Conservation Committee, Representative Ron Godbey introduced a House version of the bill. Actress and Oklahomanative Rue McClanahan penned a letter to New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, asking that he sign the bill into law if HB 559 pass the House and Senate.

A January 2001 Research and Polling, Inc. survey of New Mexico voters revealed that 81 percent of New Mexico voters are opposed to cockfighting and support banning it, while only 11% oppose such a law. Cockfighting proponents say that it is tradition—a poor excuse for animal abuse.

Cruel Tools of the Trade

Strapping weapons to roosters' legs is inarguably cruel, but cockfighters insist that the weapons give each bird a fighting chance in the pit. Spurs, gaffs, or knives are outfitted on the birds before each fight.

Spurs - A bird's natural spurs vary in length and hardness and a cock with better spurs has the upper hand in a fight. Metal spurs are occasionally attached to their natural spurs to make the fights bloodier.

Gaffs - After a bird's natural spur has been filed down, these small picks with pointed ends are placed over the spurs of the rooster's legs. Gaffs are usually between 1 and 3 inches long.

Knives - Cockfighters also sometimes attach a short or a long knife—both are small, slightly curved and sharp on one side—to a gamecock's left leg. Any knife less than 1 1/16 inches is considered a short knife; anything longer is considered a long knife.

Natural Born Killers?

Dotted along boxer Roy Jones Jr.'s 88-acre farm are small, white plastic and silver-corrugated teepees. Each of his 700 fighting roosters is tethered to a teepee with a black nylon rope that attaches to the bird's leg with a leather strap.

In February, Jones told the *New York Daily News* that the birds are tethered for their own protection. "If one of them gets off and if I don't get out there within the hour, somebody out there is going to be dead. That's how they are. Nobody has to make them do nothing."

Not quite. Although it's true that two roosters will often spar to establish dominance under natural circumstances, these fights rarely cause the same pain and suffering that staged cockfights cause. In fact, a 13-month study of feral chickens on Northwest Island off the coast of Queensland, Australia showed that "no serious fights were observed."

In *Chickens in Your Backyard*, Rick and Gail Luttmann wrote "[m]ost fighting is not very serious. . . . Chickens-roosters... do ritual face-offs and showdowns that last a few minutes at most and involve almost no physical contact. From time to time one rooster will chase another rooster off, but that is all."

Make an IMPACT

People For The Ethical Treatment Of Animals (PETA)

<http://www.peta.org/>

Humane Society of the United States

<http://www.hsus.org>

United Poultry Concerns

<http://www.upc-online.org>

Animal Protection of New Mexico

<http://www.apnm.org>



art by Charley Deppner

THE EMPIRE NEEDS NEW CLOTHES

by Thom Hartmann

IT'S EASY TO VILIFY GEORGE W. BUSH

as a cynical warmonger, anxious to attack Iraq to repay the oil companies that funded his election campaigns. But to do so is to make a dangerous and fundamental error, and such a myopic view of the Bush administration's policies puts America's future at risk.

The reality is that the current administration has a clear and specific vision for the future of America and the world, and they believe it's a positive vision. In order to put forward an alternative vision, it's essential to first understand the vision of America held by the New Right.

The core of the neo-conservative vision was first articulated on June 3, 1997, in the Statement of Principles put forth by the Project For The New American Century. Signed by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Bill Bennett, Jeb Bush, Gary Bauer, Elliott Abrams, Paul Wolfowitz, Vin Weber, Steve Forbes and others from the Reagan/Bush administration, it clearly stated that "the history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership."

Frankly acknowledging that America is a small portion of the world's population but uses a large percentage of the world's oil and other natural resources, Poppy Bush is famous for having said, "The American lifestyle is not negotiable."

McMansions for two-person families, a transportation infrastructure based on 6,000-pound SUVs carrying single individuals, cheap Chinese goods at Wal-Mart and cheap Mexican food in the supermarket—all of this is not anything America intends to give up. We're king of the hill, and we intend to stay that way, even if it means going to war to keep it.

At the core of this is oil. When the administration's people say American involvement in Iraq is "not about oil," they're often re-

sponding to charges that they're only going after profits for American oil companies. They speak truth, in that context, when they say the war isn't about revenues from oil—the profits will only be a desirable side effect. What the war is really about is the survival of the American lifestyle, which, in their world-view, is both non-negotiable and based almost entirely on access to cheap oil.

The same year Cheney, et al, wrote their papers on *The New American Century*, I wrote a book about the coming end of American peace and prosperity because of our dependence on a dwindling supply of oil. "Since the discovery of oil in Titusville, PA, where the world's first oil well was drilled in 1859," I wrote in *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight*, "humans have extracted 742 billion barrels of oil from the Earth. Currently, world oil reserves are estimated at about 1,000 billion barrels, which will last (according to the most optimistic estimates of the oil industry) 'for almost 45 years at current rates of consumption.'"

But that doesn't mean that we'll suck on the straw for 45 years and then it'll suddenly stop. When about half the oil has been removed from an underground oil field, it starts to get much harder (and thus more expensive) to extract the remaining half. The last third to quarter can be excruciatingly expensive to extract—so much so that wells these days that have hit that point are usually just capped because it costs more to extract the oil than it can be sold for, or it's more profitable to ship oil in from the Middle East, even after accounting for the cost of shipping.

The halfway point of an oil field is referred to as "The Hubbert Peak," so named after scientist M. King Hubbert, who first pointed this out in 1956 and projected 1970 as the year for the Hubbert Peak of US oil supplies. Hubbert was off by four years—1974 saw the initial decline in US oil production and the consequent rise in price. In 1975, Hubbert, who is now deceased, projected 2000 for

a worldwide Hubbert Peak. Once that point had been hit, he and other experts suggested, the world could expect economy-destabilizing spikes in the price of oil, and wars to begin over control of this vital resource.

Most of the world has now been digitally "X-rayed" using satellites, seismic data, and computers, in the process of locating 41,000 oil fields. Over 641,000 exploratory wells have been drilled, and virtually all fields that show any promise are well known and factored into the one trillion barrel estimate the oil industry uses for world oil reserves.

And of that 1 trillion barrels, Saudi Arabia has about 259 billion barrels while Iraq is estimated by the US Government to have 432 billion barrels, although at the moment only about 112 billion barrels have been tapped. The rest, virgin oil, can be pumped out for as little as \$1.50 a barrel, making Iraqi oil not only the most abundant in the world, but the most profitable. This at a time when virtually all American oil fields (except the Alaska North Slope) have dwindled past the Hubbert Peak into \$5 to \$25 per barrel pumping costs.

Thus, we see that our "lifestyle"—our ability to maintain our auto-based transportation systems, our demand for big, warm houses, and our appetite for a wide variety of cheap foods and consumer goods—is currently based on access to cheap oil. If we assume that the American people won't tolerate a change in that lifestyle, then we can extrapolate that our very security as a stable democracy is dependent on cheap oil.

Viewed in this context, the rush to seize control of the Middle East—where about a third of the planet's oil is located—makes perfect sense. It's a noble endeavor, in that view, maintaining the strength and vitality of the American Empire.

Of course, there are a few cracks in this vision. In order to have such a new American century, we must be willing to foul our waters and air with the byproducts of oil combustion and oil-fired power plants, and tolerate the explosions in cancer they bring. We must be willing to gamble that raising CO₂ levels won't destabilize the atmosphere and tip us into a new ice age by shutting down the Great Conveyor Belt warm water currents in the Atlantic. We must be willing to hold the rest of the world off at the point of a bayonet, and to take on the England/Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine type of terrorism that inevitably comes when people decide to assert nationalism and confront empire.

And, perhaps most distressing, the third George to be President of the United States must be willing to clamp down on his own dissident citizens the same way that King George III of England did in 1776. These are the requirements of empire.

The last American statesman to put forth a different vision was President Jimmy Carter, who candidly pointed out to the American people that oil was a dwindling domestic resource. Carter said that we mustn't find ourselves in a position of having to fight wars to seize other people's oil, and that a decade or two of transition to renewable energy sources would ensure the stability and future of

Frankly acknowledging that America is a small portion of the world's population but uses a large percentage of the world's oil and other natural resources, Poppy Bush is famous for having said, "The American lifestyle is not negotiable."

America without destabilizing the rest of the world.

It would even lead to a cleaner environment and a better quality of life. Carter put in place energy tax credits and incentives that birthed an exploding new industry based on building solar-heated homes, windmill-powered communities, and the development of fuel alternatives to petroleum.

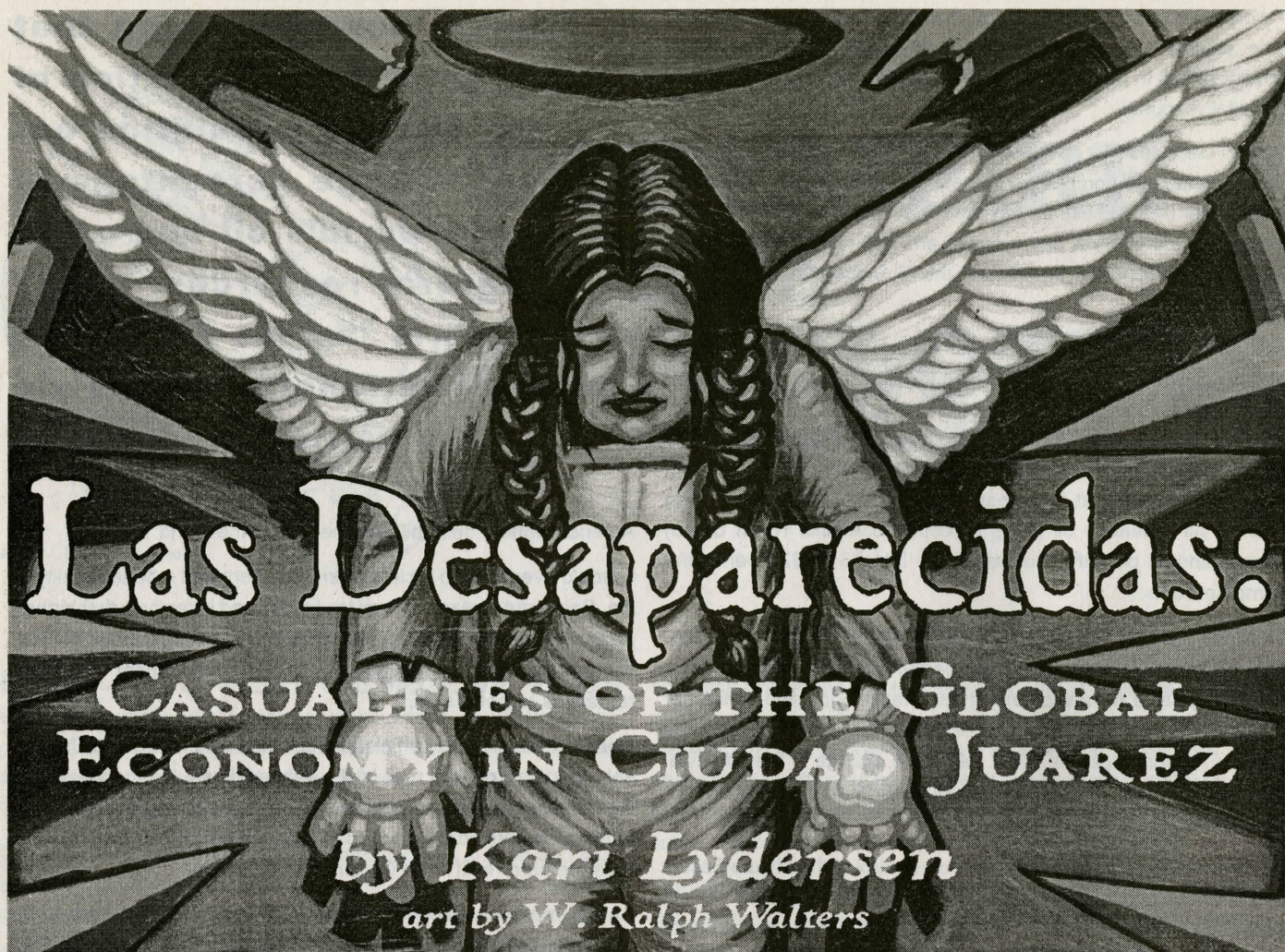
Ronald Reagan's first official act of office was to remove Carter's solar panels from the roof of the White House. He then repealed Carter's tax incentives for renewable energy and killed off an entire industry. No president since then has had the courage or vision to face the hard reality that Carter shared with us.

And so now we discover these oddities. Osama bin Laden, for example, explicitly said that he had attacked the US because we had troops stationed on the holy soil of his homeland—a position not that different from Northern Irish, Palestinian, Tamil, and Kashmiri terrorists. And our troops are there to protect our access to Saudi oil, a dependence legacy we inherited from Reagan's rejection of Carter's initiatives.

If we are to hold a vision of America that doesn't depend on foreign sources of oil and doesn't require the enormous expenditures of money and blood to project and protect empire, simply saying "stop the war" isn't enough. We must clearly articulate a vision of what America could be in a world in balance, a world at peace, and a world where the planet's vital natural resources are protected and renewed. This is the ultimate family value, the highest patriotism, and the most desperately needed story to guide the next generation of Americans.

As President John F. Kennedy said in his 1961 Inaugural Address, "All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin." ❧

Thom Hartmann is the author of over a dozen books, including "Unequal Protection" and "The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight." www.thomhartmann.com.



Note: This article is based on the writer's March 2003 trip to Juarez and El Paso. Most quotes are translated from Spanish, either by the writer or other translators.

The desert sand ripples around the bases of the eight pink wooden crosses, adorned with plastic roses, on the hill above the colonia of Anapra in Ciudad Juarez.

They stand like sentinels, across from a fence made of mattress springs, looking out over the sprawling collection of shacks constructed from tar paper, old wooden pallets and plastic crates discarded from the maquilas (factories) where most of the Anapra residents work.

The main traffic on the pitted, dusty dirt road curving by the crosses are the rattling, colorful buses—discarded school buses from the US—that come each day around 5 am and again around 2 pm to take residents to first and second maquila shifts. There's a joke circulating in the area that if you want to find Ciudad Juarez, you just follow the crosses. And there are a lot of them. These eight pink crosses commemorate the women whose bodies were found over the past few years in shallow graves in the dusty hilltop soil. Their bodies were found raped, mutilated and mangled. And they are far from the only ones.

SINCE 1993, OVER 350 WOMEN, most of them young maquila workers, have disappeared in Ciudad Juarez. The government lists at least 271 as official murders, though residents say the true number is likely much higher. Of these, 178 are listed as cases of domestic violence, with a jealous husband or lover to blame, while 93 are considered the work of a "serial killer" or killers of disputed and unknown identity. They are all part of the same phenomenon, however—a decade-long wave of hatred and brutality toward women in Juarez, characterized by its gut-wrenching perversity and the failure of the state, local and federal governments to take any meaningful steps to stop the killings or bring justice to the killers.

The bodies have been found individually as well as in groups of three, four, or eight. Most recently, on February 17 the bodies of three young women were found together and then a six-year-old girl's body was found a few days later. There are nipples, eyes and hearts cut out—signs of brutal rape and other forms of torture. Some were burned to a crisp, others left unburied to be decimated by the harsh desert elements. Some of the victims were buried wearing the clothing of other victims. They range in age from a three-year-old to an 80-year-old, but the bulk of them were young women between age 14 and 27. Many of them were described as having similar characteristics—tall, thin, lighter-skinned, attractive and fun-loving. A high number of them disappeared in the course of their work at the maquilas, the over 400 companies—80 percent of them US-owned—that have made this desert city a hub of international commerce. They disappear while waiting for or leaving the buses that take them to and from work, or after visiting the bars that are popular with maquila workers on Friday nights. Rumors abound as to who is responsible for the scores of unsolved killings. In 1995, the government arrested an Egyptian chemist named Abdel Latif Sharif Sharif, who had been deported from the US after serving time in jail for sex crimes. The murders continued after Sharif's incarceration, however. He was held for years without a conviction until recently being sentenced to 20 years for one of the handful of murders he had been charged with. Then the government blamed members of a street gang called Los Rebeldes (The Rebels). They claimed Sharif was paying the gang to keep killing women, maybe in an attempt to prove he wasn't to blame for the earlier killings. Others blame narcotraffickers, sex offenders who live in El Paso, or the government and police themselves for the killings.

The Unknown

A government roster of the victims lists many of the culprits as unknown. Likewise many of the women whose bodies were found were never identified, even though in some cases a specific person was charged with their murder. They are listed as "femenino desconocido" or "femenino no identificado"—unknown or unidentified woman. This is the way many of them were thought of in life as well as in death. The young women who work in the maquilas are like cogs in the machine of global commerce. They are expendable and interchangeable, putting in 45 hours or more per

week at low-skill assembly line jobs for average pay of \$24 to \$35 per week, depending on the fluctuation of the peso. These are women who have streamed into Juarez from destitute towns and rural areas in central and southern Mexico. The wages are low—not even enough to buy a basic weekly allotment of beans, tortillas, eggs, shampoo, aspirin and diapers, according to a study by the group Women on the Border. But they are jobs, more economic opportunity than the women had in their hometowns.

This influx of migrants to a virtually waterless town without the infrastructure to handle such population increase, has resulted in the growth of the sprawling shantytowns, called colonias, like Anapra on the outskirts of the city. Fifty percent of the roads in the colonias are unpaved, 30 percent of the residents don't have running water and at least 100,000 have no electricity, according to the labor group Centro de Educativos y Taller Laboral A.C. (CETLAC).

Maquilas started popping up in Juarez in the mid-1960s, originally started as a way to use the labor of male Mexican workers returning from the US after the end of the bracero guest-worker program. US and international companies, encouraged by the local and federal Mexican government, realized there was money to be made by harnessing low wage labor across the border to assemble goods for cheap transport back to the US and around the world. Among the many maquilas currently operating in Juarez are Lear, Johnson and Johnson, Honeywell, Avon Automotive and Emerson. The maquilas make everything from electronics to pharmaceuticals to auto parts and household goods.

While the maquilas were originally intended to employ men, managers soon realized that it was in fact young women who made the perfect employees. They are considered more docile and obedient, and their young nimble fingers are better suited to the repetitive work. By the 1980s, about 90 percent of maquila workers were women. More men have become employed in the past decade, with the institution of maquilas making auto parts and other things requiring heavier lifting. But women still make up a sizable 58 percent of the approximately 230,000-person maquila workforce in Juarez.

At first glance, the maquilas look like decent places to work. They are gorgeously landscaped, clean and well lit. But in reality, the working conditions are far from satisfactory. Workers are forced to put in mandatory overtime on top of nine-hour days (that stretch to twelve hours when an average one and a half hour bus ride on each side is factored in). They are regularly exposed to toxic chemicals and dangerous machinery without adequate safety equipment. Sexual harassment and abuse in the maquilas is rampant. Women have virtually no choice but to submit to ongoing sexual harassment as well as actual abuse and rape to hold onto and advance in their jobs. Since the government mandates 60 days of paid leave for pregnant women, maquilas force women to take pregnancy tests and don't hire anyone who is pregnant. Former workers say that in some cases, these "pregnancy tests" consist of showing their used sanitary napkins to managers.

"All the corporations have the same code of conduct—sexual ha-

rassment, mandatory pregnancy tests, poor working conditions, humiliation," said Veronica Leiba, a former maquila worker and labor organizer.

Many women are also forced to resort to prostitution because of the impossibility of supporting a family on maquila wages.

This climate makes the rapes, sexual mutilations and murders more understandable. In everyday life, women are regularly treated as objects of manual labor and sexual gratification for men. That they would meet their deaths that way, and that no one in a position of power would even seem to care, is just the next step.

Return Our Daughters Home

Up until several years ago, Rosario Acosta was not an activist. But then her 12-year-old niece was murdered. While her young niece was not a maquila worker, the murder led Acosta to become obsessed with the mass murders of maquila workers and other young women. Today, she dedicates herself full time to the struggle to stop the murders and end the impunity enjoyed by many of the killers. She heads the group *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (May Our Daughters Return Home) out of a small office in Juarez. Acosta has testified in front of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington DC and met countless times with local, state and federal government officials demanding action. Since hearing the testimony of Acosta and others, last year the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, an arm of the OAS, launched an investigation into the killings and requested accountability from the Mexican government. While this was a welcome step, family members of the victims aren't holding their breath.

"It's promising, but at the same time it's all caught up in bureaucracy," said Acosta. "Meanwhile women continue to disappear. The government wants to hide the problem. The attorney general and the prosecutors are just reducing these lives to numbers. They don't really recognize what's going on, the pain and suffering of the families, the impact it has on every family in this crisis."

The Mexican government has appointed a string of special prosecutors to investigate the killings, but like Acosta, most victims' families, other maquila workers, and many in the general public feel the government is not taking even the most basic steps to adequately investigate and prevent the killings.

"Over 300 women have been mur-

dered in Juarez, and no serious investigation is being done," said Texas State Senator Eliot Shapleigh at a rally in El Paso, just across the border from Juarez, on International Women's Day, March 8, 2003.

In a documentary produced by Lourdes Portillo called "*Senorita Extraviada*" (Missing Woman) exploring the killings, mothers of the murdered women describe how police refused to investigate their daughters' disappearances at all, often saying they must have run off with a boyfriend. "When women report their daughter has disappeared, the police respond by challenging the families to convince them of the importance of doing a search," said Acosta. "The police ask personal questions—did she have a boyfriend, was she planning to go out. They say the girls weren't careful enough."

Many blame the government's failure to stop the killings on ineptness and a lack of effort on the part of the local police. There is a binational effort to get the FBI involved in the investigations, a plan which the US has been amenable to but which, besides a few joint trainings, the Mexican government has failed to embrace.

Others have a darker view of the police's failure to adequately investigate the murders. In the maquilas and colonias of Juarez, many believe police and government officials themselves are responsible for many of the killings.

"It's the police doing it, that's why they won't investigate," said a 25-year-old male cafeteria worker at the Lear maquila after a shift in early March. "That's what everyone thinks. They say people get paid to bring them women, 500 pesos (about \$50 U.S.) for each woman."

In Portillo's documentary, a woman describes being raped and abused while in police custody. She says the police showed her photos of mutilated bodies in the desert, and threatened that she would be next if she reported her rape.

Blaming the Victim

The explanation for the killings, often given by the police and government, including the governor of the state of Chihuahua, is that the women were involved in prostitution or drug trafficking, and that they shouldn't have been out by themselves at night. But this excuse doesn't stand up to the most basic logic, since some of the women, including the bodies found February 17, were abducted in broad daylight. Others are forced to be out alone in the dark because their maquila shifts end at 12:30 am or they have to catch 5 am buses in the morning.



"The maquila owners say the reason they're getting killed is they're wearing those short skirts and going dancing," said Victor Munoz, a Chihuahua native and member of an El Paso-based coalition against the killings. "It's the attitude of blaming the victim."

Advocates say efforts to get the maquilas to provide more security for women on their way to and from work have gone nowhere.

"We've raised the issue of safety with the maquilas, but they keep telling us they're doing everything they can and there's nothing more they can do," said Beatriz Lujan, a leader of CETLAC.

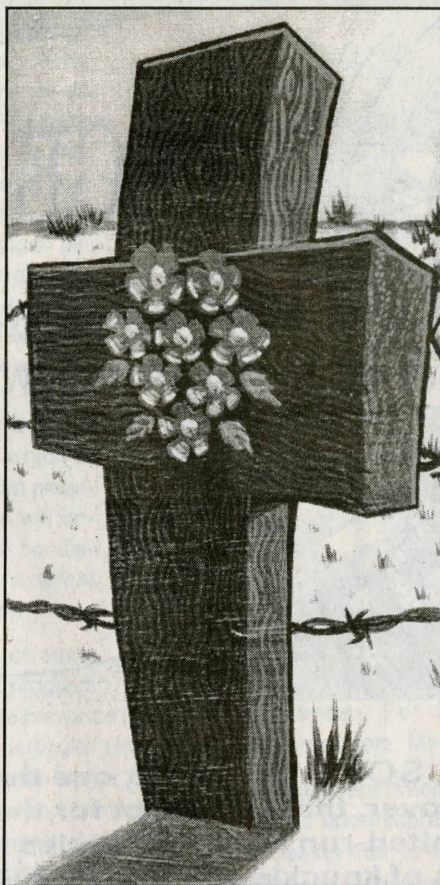
Even if the victims *were* working as prostitutes, or had willingly gone on dates with their eventual killers, this doesn't justify the murders or decrease the government's responsibility to investigate them. The same applies to the known domestic violence victims, many of whose killers have gotten off scot-free or with relatively light sentences.

On a larger level, many see the murders as part of an overall culture that wants to keep women subservient and dependent on men. This includes both the maquila owners who want their female employees to be docile and obedient, and husbands who want their wives to be the same way.

Women say there is also general resentment from men at the fact women are earning money and taking jobs in a tight economy. Overwhelming and increasing poverty just exacerbates these feelings.

"There are a lot of problems for poor people in Juarez," said Esther Chavez Cano, founder of Casa Amiga, the only domestic violence crisis center in the city. "Jobs are being lost at the maquilas and the maquilas are paying less. Domestic violence increases, alcoholism has increased tremendously. In our culture, men feel they are supposed to be the supporters of the family, and they are frustrated that the women are earning the money, so they abuse more."

The recession in the US, and the growing interest in even cheaper labor in Asia, has had a significant effect on the maquila industry in the past few years. Over 30 maquilas have recently closed, at a loss of about 100,000 jobs. Yet economic conditions in the rest of Mexico continue to worsen as well, so the stream of workers up to Juarez continues. This squeeze threatens to make the violence against women even worse. With more competition for jobs, maquilas will have even less incentive to provide decent working conditions, wages and security measures for women. And the



increased economic pressure on men will cause many to take out their frustrations on their domestic partners, not to mention increasing men's anger at competing with women for fewer maquila jobs.

"The maquilas are not trying to create better conditions, and worker frustration is increasing," said Leiba. "This is a time bomb waiting to go off."

La Lucha Continua

The situation is not without hope, however. A variety of women's groups and organizations of the victims' mothers have formed in Juarez to fight for accountability, justice and the prevention of more killings. Coalitions have also been formed with U.S. groups near the border and major U.S. foundations have funneled financial resources to the struggle. The event on International Women's Day drew about 500 people marching through El Paso and Juarez, demanding an end to the murders and violence against women in general. The issue is urgent, entailing not only the search for justice for past victims and the safety of

potential victims but symbolizing the well being and hope of Mexican women as a whole. At a March 5 reading by Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez, author of a new book, *Huesos Secos - Dry Bones*, about the killings, distraught audience members from El Paso and Juarez said as much.

"These young women represent the future of Mexico," said one young woman. "And they are being killed. That is a metaphor for the future of Mexico." ❧

Kari Lydersen is a journalist based in Chicago and an instructor for the Urban Youth International Journalism Program. She writes for IMPACT press, In These Times, Punk Planet, Clamor and LIP magazine, among others.

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PEACE is HELL

Winning the war will be easy
compared to winning the peace.

by Nick Gillespie
art by Greg Rebis

IT'S A STRANGE SORT OF WAR, one that's essentially over before it begins. All over, that is, except for the shooting, which is likely to play as a limited-run reality TV series rather than as a particularly tense series of knuckle-biting maneuvers playing out over months or years.

There are already American casualties, and for the families of the dead and injured, any casualty is one too many. But in the scheme of things, no one expects this to be a particularly tough fight. There will doubtless be a lot of stomach-turning footage and imagery to come out of this war, but like its predecessor, Gulf War 2 will likely be epic only to the soldiers on the ground.

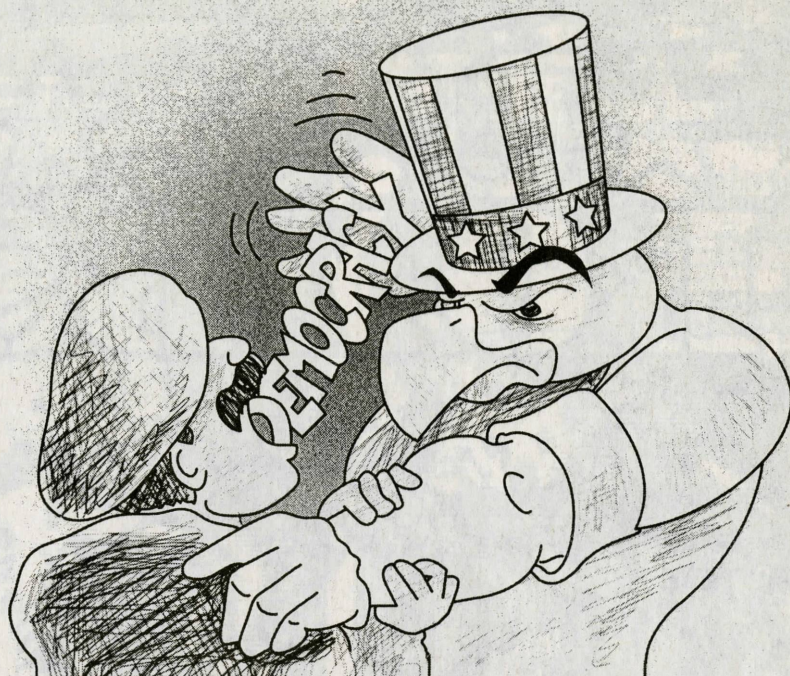
This is the face of preemptive war. But the real question has always been whether we can win the preemptive peace. President Bush has offered up three basic, overlapping rationales for the war, painting it variously as a humanitarian intervention to liberate the people of Iraq from a tyrant; a necessary move to destroy Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (including nukes) before he can use them against the US or give them to terrorists; and as an attempt to jump start democracy in the Middle East.

These arguments did little to win support, both in the US and abroad, for non-UN-sanctioned action. While a fair amount of that resistance can be chalked up to reflexive anti-Americanism, national self-interest, or some combination of the two, international support remains vitally important to winning the peace. World opinion matters, even if it's only a grudging acceptance that the US is not simply using its dominant global position to pursue a narrowly self-interested agenda. This is especially true when it comes to garnering help in eradicating Islamist terrorism, the one absolutely undeniable threat to peace around the globe.

Humanitarian intervention—pooh-poohed by Candidate Bush, who sniffed at nation-building and promised a “humble” foreign policy—rarely wins the hearts and minds of detractors, since it rarely happens out of anything but highly mixed motives. Consider President Clinton’s bombing of Kosovo, ostensibly done to protect ethnic Albanians from genocide. However much it might have helped that situation (opinions vary widely and certainly the region post Milosevic is nothing to pin high hopes on), it was widely—and convincingly—interpreted as little more than a wag-the-dog scenario cooked up to divert attention away from the sex scandals that plagued Clinton’s second term. Ironically, humanitarian interventions, even when they do clearly improve the lives of the liberated, only get full credit when the “savior” nation has nothing to gain—which of course makes them less likely to occur in the first place. Hence, while it’s clear that deposing Saddam will improve the lot of Iraqis, any such benefit will be discounted precisely by the amount that Saddam’s defeat is seen as furthering other American interests.

Similarly, if the US does not find “weapons of mass destruction” or evidence of a vibrant nuclear program in occupied Iraq, it will be virtually impossible to convince the world retroactively that war was necessary at this particular moment in time. The odds of finding such material may be longer than the Bush administration wants. As Walter Pincus and Dana Milbank reported in the March 17th edition of the *Washington Post*, the Bush administration’s case for war rests upon “a number of allegations against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that have been challenged—and in some cases disproved—by the United Nations, European governments and even US intelligence reports.” Chief among these is the claim that Iraq actually reconstituted its nuclear program. The aluminum tubes that supposedly clinched the case are apparently the wrong type for nuclear weapons and the president’s claim that Iraq sought to buy uranium has been “refuted,” write Pincus and Milbank, while “other claims have been questioned [and] their validity can be known only after US forces occupy Iraq.” Much in the court of world opinion will hinge upon what is found after the fact. Given that Iraq has apparently launched some Scud missiles that weren’t supposed to exist, it may well be that caches of biological and chemical weapons await post-war inspections as well. If those weapons are not found, however, the US will come out of this war with fewer allies or “cooperating nations” than it started with.

Finally, there is the question of the coming occupation. Leaving aside the large issue of human and financial costs, it seems highly unlikely that the US will succeed in turning Iraq into a democracy anytime soon, much less creating a petri dish for the same throughout the region. Historically, the US has always favored stability over self-rule, often seeing the two as mutually exclusive. As in South Korea, to name another place in which US involvement was decisive, it will likely take decades for Iraq to emerge as anything like a Western-style democracy. As columnist Georgie Anne Geyer writes, “Iraq is the least likely country in the world to be ‘democratized’...economic and social problems there [are] so intense as to undermine basic stability in the region for years.”



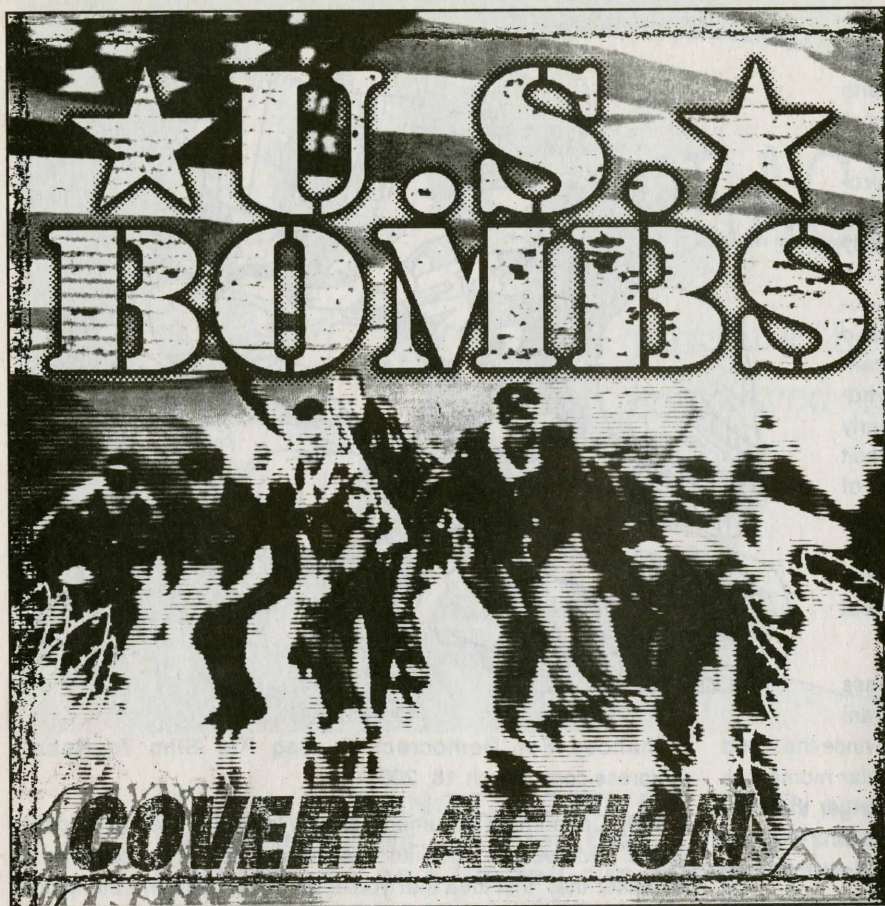
(“Chances For Democracy In Iraq Are Slim To None”, uExpress.com, March 18, 2003)

A State Department document recently leaked to the *Los Angeles Times* underscores such an assessment, arguing according to its leaker that “this idea that you’re going to transform the Middle East and fundamentally alter its trajectory is not credible.” Founded in its modern form in 1932, Iraq has no tradition of democracy. Rather, it has all too much acquaintance with a succession of more or less benevolent strong men and tyrants. Not only would democracy “be subject to exploitation by anti-American elements,” it’s far from clear that what happens in Iraq will have much spillover effect. As an intelligence officer told the *Times*, “to sell [the war] on the basis that this is going to cause 1,000 flowers to bloom is naive.” (“Democracy Domino Theory ‘Not Credible’”, March 14, 2003)

Back in the days of the first Gulf War, the current president’s father declared that America’s decisive military victory exorcised—finally!—the demons of defeat that haunted our nation. He may have been right on that limited score, but it’s worth remembering that whatever your view on the current matter, we botched that peace. Opinions vary on why—hawks will tell you it’s because we didn’t finish the job by rolling the tanks all the way to Baghdad; moderates might say it’s because we didn’t support the uprisings against Saddam that occurred right after the war; doves might say it’s because we intervened at all and then parked troops in Saudi Arabia for a dozen years.

But the fact that we’re back fighting over the same sand means we left unfinished business. As we steamroll to military victory once again, that’s an ominous sign for the coming peace, especially in a post-9/11 world, where the stakes are higher than ever. ❧

Nick Gillespie is Reason’s editor-in-chief. Visit www.reason.com for more information and to read more of his articles.

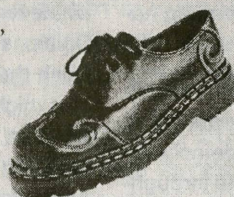


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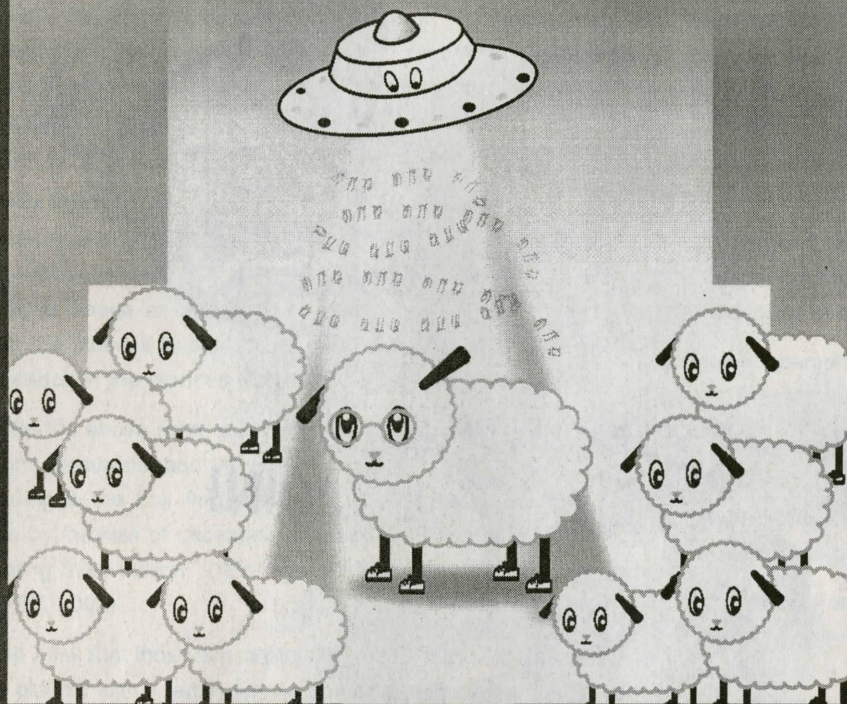
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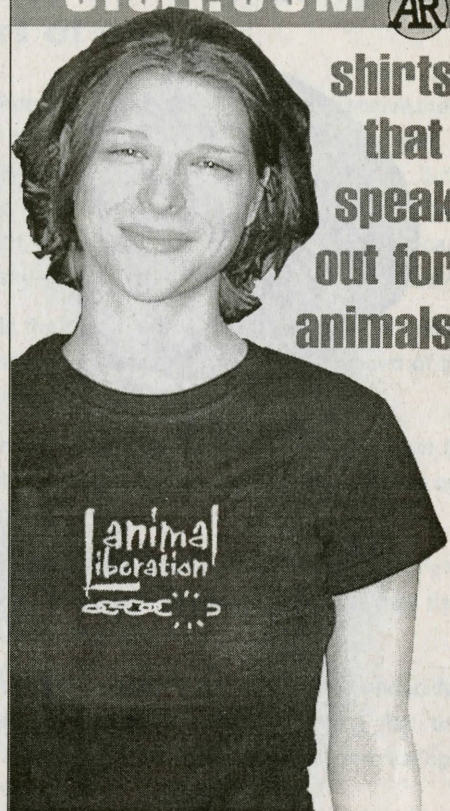
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The U.S. Army

**A Class Action Suit
Waiting to Happen**

by JEFF NALL



An indignant, emotionally discountenanced parent of a former smoker walks out of a courtroom in Los Angeles to greet an audience of media personnel. He wears a proud smile, with wavering lips, and is caught between tears of joy and tears of anger.

On this day, a jury has passed judgment in his favor against big tobacco, proclaiming the company that produced the cigarettes used deceptive advertisement and irresponsibly withheld important information concerning factors of risk involved in participating in the act of smoking.

Jack's son Tom died as a result of a cancer that spread through his body until life escaped each of his pores. The allure of smoking—its social trappings, its flavor, its affect, its commercial appeal, its image as portrayed by decades of advertisement—lent Tom the motives to begin a hazardous career of smoking, which he ended in the glorious clutches of an IV and a hospital bed.

While the above story is but a fictitious illustration of the modern plight consumers and purveyors of tobacco face, the fact is, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, in Oregon alone "two cases filed by families of deceased smokers produced damage awards totaling \$180 million." ("Ex-Smoker Wins Tobacco Suit", September 27, 2002)

Now, I ask that those with a propensity to abstract thought replace the plaintiff with a family whose son or daughter has died in combat fighting a war in Iraq or protecting other foreign interests abroad. Furthermore, replace the defendant with the United States Army.

Seems like a stretch, you decide, responding aloud, "Soldiers willingly participate in joining the military. They also enjoy benefits, training and are paid very well."

But, I ask, is it really hard to fathom? One of the main reasons tobacco companies are forced to pay inordinate amounts of money to plaintiffs is because many courts have decided their former methods of advertisement and lack of warnings were adverse. Tobacco companies purposely omitted truths about the affects smoking could have on individuals; moreover they attempted to lure young impressionable people to a "pleasurable" activity via a potent ad campaign. Tobacco advertisements listed all the good and left the bad up to self-evident cognition.

"The military doesn't do that," many may remark. But upon closer examination, there appears to be some similarity between the two.

One of the best examples of such activity is found in the ranks of the Army. The new ad campaign—most have almost surely heard of—is themed "an Army of one."

Literature on this "army of one" can be found at many high schools and on college campuses. In reading through the literature there is no mention of the perils that await those who enlist. Page after

page speaks of the incentive to pay off college loans, receive medical and dental care and earn thousands of dollars each year. To many Americans this may sound like a dream come true. But if people are lured into a hazardous career in the military that may very well end in death, all because of a keen, misleading ad campaign, is the US military—like big tobacco—liable for those deaths?

At one point, towards the end of one brochure found at a Central Florida community college, potential recruits are reminded of the opportunity to earn incentives totaling up to \$85,000.

Another pamphlet reads: "Dear High School Graduate...Now it's time to make the rest of your dreams come true. The Air Force can help.

"We offer outstanding job and leadership training, a variety of programs to help you pay for college expenses, plus the free time you'll need to pursue your interests."

Another Air Force pamphlet reads, "Whether you are undecided how to go about achieving your goals or already have a plan, one thing's for sure: The Air Force Reserve will assist you in creating a life above and beyond."

Other than the seemingly paradoxical insinuation that one "creates" life by joining a military service, the literature goes on to list the following rewards for those who enroll: competitive pay; opportunity to travel; retirement program; leadership experience; camaraderie; and use of base facilities, including tax-free shopping privileges, golfing, bowling and more.

Meanwhile a Navy pamphlet lists their benefits as being "good pay, regular promotions when you qualify, opportunities for advanced education through the Montgomery GI Bill, Navy Tuition Assistance, and Navy College Programs, health care and low-cost life insurance. All this and the opportunity to travel to places such as Italy, Spain, Hawaii, and Japan just to mention a few."

All this is said without the hint of the danger that awaits one who joins a group of working warriors. With bright literature, smiling faces on each page, donning a "why not join in the fun" demeanor, one can only wonder, why aren't we all in the Army? It not only pays for the education any free man deserves, it also pays you to go have fun in Hawaii.

This imagery draws comparison to beautiful women frolicking on the beach, who stop to take notice of an extra "cool" guy draining some nicotine down his pipes. That literature, in essence, is the image of a prototype of cool so many men attempt to achieve—that venerable rustic look of the Marlboro man. But like military litera-

ture leaving out images of dead bodies, we don't see the real Marlboro man suffering from cancer.

And although more solemn, the Marines pamphlet is laudatory as well, praying upon the adventure factor present in young adults. "There is a world out there that you have only heard about. It is a world where heroes are made and missions are accomplished." Still, there is no talk about the factor of death.

A bit unsettling, nearly each piece of literature speaks directly to high school students. "High school seniors can begin taking part in the Marine Reserve before graduation," reads one pamphlet. "You can work with your future reserve unit one weekend a month for up to twelve months, receiving four days pay for each weekend of service. Following graduation, you will go through recruit skills training to become a Marine Reservist."

John P. Boyce, Jr., public affairs specialist of the US Army Public Affairs, Community Relations & Outreach Division in Washington DC, said the Army's literature does tell the real story of service.

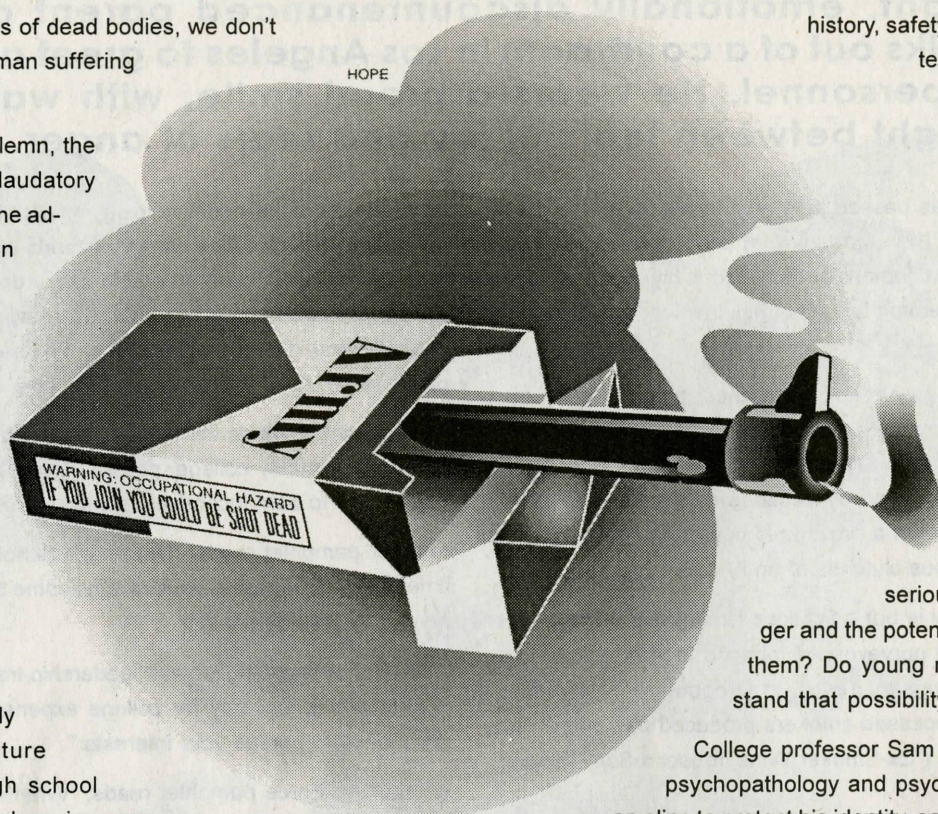
"Our literature, commercials and web information," he said, "show real recruits struggling with basic training, facing their personal challenges, working as team members and facing life's personal obstacles with the Army's values."

But when it comes to expressing the dangers of participating in the Army, Boyce feels there is nothing the Army can say about the perils people aren't already aware of.

"If they've ever seen a war movie, read a book about battle or seen a newscast about any war in the past 100 years, yes ... recruits are aware of the potential dangers as well as the benefits of fighting to defend our society."

When I asked Mr. Boyce to what extent recruiters discuss the dangers of being involved in the military, he said recruiters do not necessarily explain the horrors of war.

"Recruiters answer recruit's questions," said Boyce. "Recruits who do go on to military service also receive a healthy dose of military



history, safety training and work in teams to anticipate and avoid most dangers. This is a vital part of our culture, along with our values."

Yet the question remains—is it too little too late? Should the military do more to warn impressionable recruits about the

serious presence of danger and the potential death that awaits them? Do young recruits really understand that possibility?

College professor Sam Mason, an expert in psychopathology and psychology who is using an alias to protect his identity, says that young people up to 19 have not fully developed enough to understand the consequences of enrollment in the services.

"Prior to [military service], it doesn't exist, but once you're into the system then it becomes sort of a gung ho attitude," said Mason.

"There is no way to understand the whole grasp of [the dangers of potential service in war], it's too much first off. Developmentally their whole cognition is not even finished developing. You give a 17- or 18-year-old a gun, he might shake his head yes but I don't think he can fully understand the situation."

Mason also pointed out that in instances where people sign up for weekend service, many are caught off guard when actually called into full service.

"All these reservists that have been called up, one weekend a month, two weekends a year, did you ever think you'd be called up for war, [many are asking] 'what do you mean I have to go to war.' I believe a lot of people were shell shocked they had to go to war [during the Gulf War and now once more]."

Furthermore, Mason, who served in the military during Vietnam, explained his experience has adversely affected him in many ways he could not have imagined.

"It affected me, psychologically, emotionally, physically," he said. "It still affects me. You just can't push the button in the brain then erase it. The memories are there. I choose to live with it, but that's the cost I guess, and no one knows it before going into it."

In a country where most of the population—especially the poor—

do not know what it's like to see a doctor on a regular basis or are used to earning minuscule wages offered at fast food restaurants, the benefits, in addition to the image of honor and prestige associated with serving one's country, are a barrage of pleasantries; only a fool would turn away from such a wonderful opportunity. And many, fearful of a struggling job market and a fruitless future filled with financial distress, choose to rely on the perennial economy of combat forces to provide living wages and prosperity. When the dangers of service are not addressed to the extent one would experience in getting one's driver's license (we've all seen the gory videos of fun nights on the town gone wrong) it leaves little wonder that service in the military is such a popular choice among our young people.

The more we inspect the issue, one distinct difference between tobacco companies and the armed forces becomes apparent—one comes with a warning of potential harm from the Surgeon General.

There is no warning at the bottom of an Army advertisement expressing "death by machine gun fire may occur," or "may cause psychological damage as we erase prior mode of behavior replacing it with license to kill."

Instead, we are shown Hollywood-produced commercials and glamorized literature that portrays a fun loving group of people getting paid to go to school, hang out together, and pursue their own interests.

In fact, it is known that the military spends at least 100 million dollars to produce these materials in an obvious effort to compel service, just as a company might encourage consumerism.

The military, too, is a business venture for many—American taxpayers spend more than 300 billion dollars each year on the industry that is the defense department. Though a public industry, many earn great annual salaries and the salaries of recruits expands as the number of recruits increases.

And just like smokers don't start smoking to enjoy its addictive properties or experience cancer as a result, recruits don't join the military to participate in combat. It's the image of smokers and valiant, impenetrable soldiers seen on TV that people are sold on. In an article written by Robert Hey, then-new recruit Shanan Burns is quoted as saying, "it sounds good to be a part of the world's greatest army." ("Military recruiters new message", *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 9, 2001)

For many, the Army sounds like a good idea, until they're actually deployed into open warfare. According to other professionals, many recruits are not seeking experience in combat or the ways of warriors, they're just trying to pad their resumé or pay off debts.

In the aforementioned article by Robert Hey, Norfolk Army recruiter Sergeant Marcus Campbell was quoted saying, "We've been seeing an influx of college-orientated applicants who want their col-

lege loans paid off, [or] who want money for college, who're looking to make themselves marketable."

While recruits seem to be guaranteed the best possible training from the greatest Army ever assembled, the question remains: do people know what they're getting into after reading literature and watching commercials that narrate, "If someone wrote a book about your life, would anyone want to read it," as one now on TV asks?

Mr. Boyce again reiterated that the US military does, in fact, do all it can possibly do to ensure the health, training and safety of recruits after they've joined. He also said that the risks of service are well documented and known throughout the country. "As with firefighters, policemen and other professions, the risks of injury and death are well publicized in our society and well known throughout our nation's history. We address these legitimate fears by placing a high value on our soldiers' lives, being risk adverse to risking lives, planning precision military operations and, most importantly, training our people well," said Boyce.

So while it has become obvious to Americans that smoking harms the lungs, among other parts of the body, our justice department has held to the enlightened perspective that those peddlers of this product must accept responsibility for the manner in which they identify their product. Our juries and judges have scrutinized the methods by which advertisers achieve the goal of snatching up willing patrons and participants. Time and time again, these very institutions have questioned the professional ethics that tobacco CEO's continuously overlook, opting to concentrate on the benefits of smoking (e.g. the image, taste, positive affect) while avoiding the health risks until it was too late for so very many.

Whereas the tobacco companies are phasing out their use of billboards and advertising in sports stadiums, the US Army has phased in sponsorship campaigns such as NASCAR stock cars and Arena League football jerseys. In the article mentioned earlier of the new message of the military, Brig. Gen. Duane Deal, commander of Air Force Recruiting Services, put it into perspective in saying, "We're on billboards. In Syracuse, New York we're even on milk cartons."

The new military image is a calculated attempt to encourage independent, thrill-seeking personalities to join a club that will pay for college, travel across the world, and an annual salary, not to mention free room and board. For many, this slanted campaign leaves much unsaid and allows silence to elucidate the most devastating of all physical disabilities, death.

Syndicated columnist Norman Solomon reviewed much of the "army of one's" recruitment materials. ("Media Sizzle for an Army of Fun" August/September 2002, IMPACT press) He explains that simply by calling the Army's 800 number, one can receive a free Army T-shirt and a video called "212 Ways to be a Soldier." The article describes the video as "graphics flash with a cutting edge

look (supplied by a designer who gained ad-biz acclaim for working on a smash Nike commercial)."

The article goes on to state, "There's no talk of risk and scarcely a mention of killing." The military would seem to be serving impressionable thrill seekers loads of fun without the danger.

In the video, soldiers hail the promise of college education and exciting careers as important benefits, according to Solomon. The US military has even released a video game, once again putting a fantasy spin on the realities of training for and fighting wars.

Like any corporation, the military seems to have its sights on growing. Organizations like the ROTC at high schools and colleges are not uncommon and are expanding. Recruiters are now even given access to public high school students without the permission of parents, so that they may pursue individuals thought to be good candidates for service.

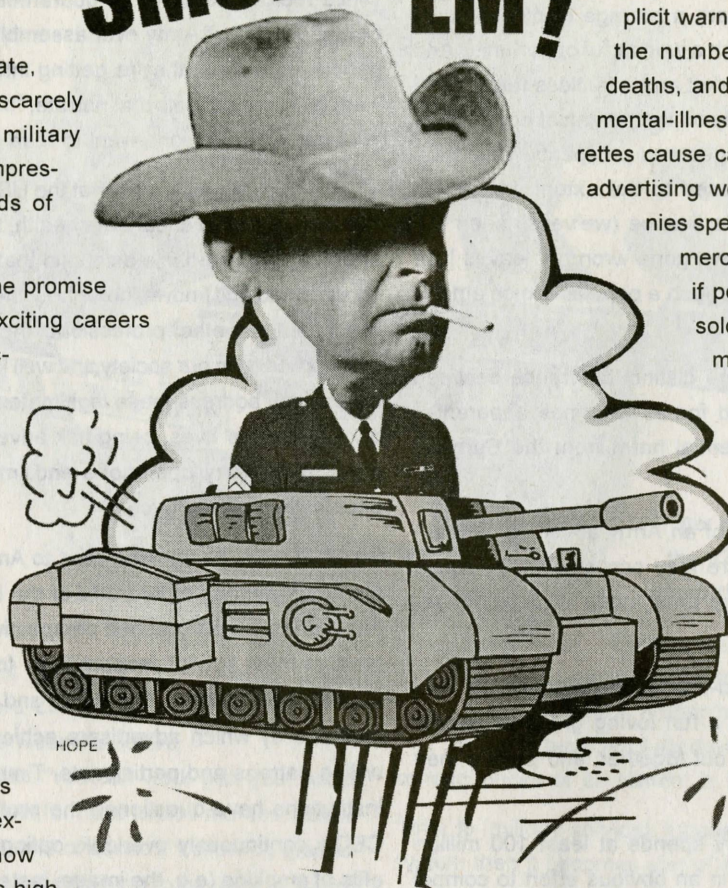
But the question is not whether the military is good or bad, necessary or superfluous. The question is, are they liable for the deaths of those tantalized by a glorious, seemingly fun environment in the armed forces? Should parents, wives and children have the right to sue the Army for the loss of their loved ones?

Mr. Boyce believes the US Army is responsible for those soldiers that serve the institution. He says they have done and continue to do their best to ensure the well being of their personnel.

"The Armed Forces protect their people," he said, "mitigate risks, provide rigorous, realistic training and serve at the direction of the President and the American people. Our government, in fact, does assist with soldiers group life insurance, casualty assistance and family benefits ... but we work far harder to avoid deaths. So, yes, our government and our society is liable in many profound aspects for the deaths of military personnel ... and has been for 227 years. America honors those brave souls each Memorial Day and recognizes the living each Veterans Day."

But the question remains—would 70 million Americans be en-

SMOKE 'EM!



rolled in the service if they believed their lives were at risk? Would they think twice before joining if advertising were forced to include an explicit warning that soldiers may die, and show the number of military casualties including deaths, and resulting cases of debilitation and mental-illness? Because, while it's obvious cigarettes cause cancer, one must ask if the intent of advertising weren't coercive, why would companies spend millions to make the perfect commercial? Why would the US military? And if people were so interested in being a soldier, why is it necessary to spend so much time, effort and money engaging them?

The mediums in use seem to be specifically designed to garner the interests of a young video game playing, thrill-seeking generation. Simply put, advertising sells products. Or does it simply inform?

Mr. Boyce said the US military's goal is to use the means at their disposal and let Americans know what the Army today is about.

"Our goal is to show people what it's like to be in the Army today using many different media to meet their information needs and desires. It's also reinforced and clarified by talking with people who've made the choice to serve our nation freely."

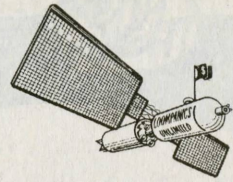
Still, one must consider that most Americans know cigarettes are bad for them and can cause death. Yet tobacco companies are forced to label their products as harmful and are not allowed to advertise anywhere near schools where children attend. So while Americans may very well recall the deaths of Vietnam, it might take a reminder, a warning label on the beautifully packaged career in the military, to enlighten recruits (especially those who weren't around to endure an incident like Vietnam) of the horrors TV and books can never properly depict. Each American deserves the right and privilege to serve our great nation, but each should also be fully aware of the perils that can hardly be imagined, should one engage the enemy in open warfare. One should be told of the apocalyptic nature of war, where each second survived is but a fleeting blessing from a hell unimaginable. Just take a look at the photojournalists who documented the last Gulf War, the charred bodies of civilians and soldiers, who once were civilians like many of our young people, and who just happened to be wearing fatigues in hopes of bettering their lives and the lives of their family. ❧

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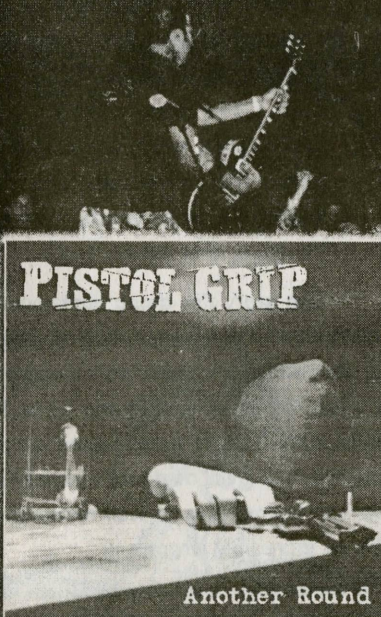


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The Myth of Objective Journalism

by Adam Finley

A few months ago, a friend and I traveled to a nearby college to hear Carl Bernstein speak before a small group of students inside the college chapel. Most of the students appeared to be there against their will, jotting down just enough notes to fill up whatever essay they might have to compose on this old man who was indirectly forcing them to keep their cell phones on vibrate for the better part of an hour.

After telling three talkative students sitting next to me to shut up, I sat back and listened to the man who helped expose Watergate as he expounded on the geographical bias of American journalism, the "triumph of idiot culture," and the overall state of the press today, which according to Bernstein, is rather pathetic. "Where does the 'McLaughlin Group' rank on the 'Idiot Culture' scale?" he asked, "Way the hell up there."

Unlike almost everyone else in the chapel, I found that hour to be the most intellectually refreshing of my young adult life. I know very little about Bernstein, but everything he said echoed my own beliefs on journalism and how information is transmitted to the masses. "There is no such thing as objective journalism," he said, "deciding what's important is an extremely subjective act." I had always said that myself, and at that moment, surrounded by glazed eyes and bored, shuffling feet, I felt vindicated.

If any branch of the press has taken the idea of subjectivity to heart, it's the independent weekly. Most large cities have one: a harsh, unflinching alternative to the antiquated local paper. Many of these tend to become cliché, churning out yearly paint-by-number stories on marijuana legalization while a handful manage to rise above and dig out stories that are so important, so timely, and so crucial to the local citizenship that the local news outlets will pass them up for a full-page spread on the latest contestants to be kicked off American Idol. I've been contributing to my local independent weekly for the past seven months, and while the paper isn't with-

out its flaws, it is the only non-corporate news outlet in my city. The pay, if you can even call it that, is horrible, but the satisfaction of knowing I'm not writing fluff pieces is priceless.

As of this writing, I'm mired in a sea of court documents, interviews, and notes concerning the alleged mistreatment of some Hispanic workers in a local meat processing plant. My editor hooked me up with the story, stating, "It sounds like a good 'evil company exploiting non-union, immigrant workers' type story."

The corporation would probably disagree with him, even if his statement were true. I wasn't expecting to call a representative from the plant and have him or her say something along the lines of, "Well, everyone just kind of got bored one day so we decided

to take advantage of all the workers. It seemed like a good idea at the time." But then, one can't assume, sight unseen, that the corporation is completely in the wrong, either. I've got a lot of research ahead of me before I put anything to paper, but whatever angle I choose, it's going to be based on facts. Journalism may be subjective, but it's credible subjectivism I'm shooting for.

During his speech, Bernstein made reference to the film "All the President's Men," based on the book written by himself and Bob Woodward. "You will note," he said, "the vast amounts of McDonald's wrappers scattered about the newsroom." The research, in other words, was exhaustive, and exhausting.

The story I'm doing isn't exactly Watergate, but it does need to be told. I'm not expecting my apartment to be littered with Big Mac wrappers; perhaps a couple of pizza boxes and some tea bags. When all is said and done, it's going to be the best possible story I could write, based on the information I will have uncovered, and it will no doubt cause a few readers to wonder out loud how something so well researched and so well-written could be so incredibly wrong. ❧



CARL BERNSTEIN
JOURNALIST

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BY KEITH KNIGHT

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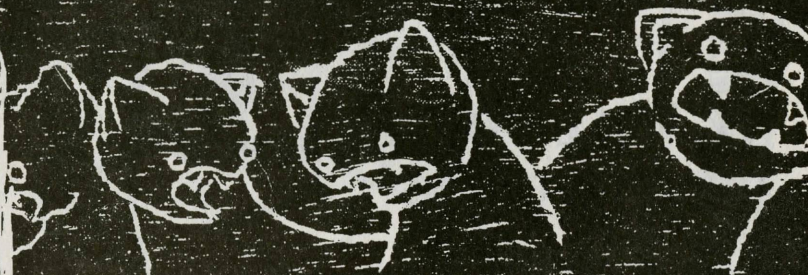
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WATCHDOGS, LAPDOGS, AND SLEEPING DOGS

BY WILL POTTER
ART BY GREG REBIS



JOURNALISTS LIKE TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS WATCHDOGS, nipping at the heels of the powerful and guarding democracy. Progressive critics see them as lapdogs for the political and corporate elite. More often reporters are just tired old dogs asleep on the porch.

Take a recent Sunday morning adventure (February 23rd) at NBC studios in Washington, D.C., where I joined a pack of these wet dogs taking shelter from a downpour in the NBC lobby. The NBC staff wheeled out a TV cart so reporters could watch "Meet the Press" with Tim Russert. Russert interviewed Richard Perle, chairman of the Defense Policy Board (a Pentagon advisory panel charged with overseeing military preparedness), and Rep. Dennis Kucinich, the Ohio Democrat who has emerged as one of the few strong congressional voices against war.

It's a Sunday routine: At the end of the show, reporters gather outside the front door and beg the guests for a few soundbite scraps.

Until then, they sprawl out on benches in the lobby, absent-mindedly watching the interviews. This is the state of American media, the free press: reporters and camera crews watching an interview on television as it takes place just down the hall. Journalists don't like the ridiculous setup, but they don't have much choice. They have to meet the demands of the corporate media conglomerates they work for, and to do that they have to play the game.

Some read newspapers. One takes notes. Another reporter talks

on a cell phone to his wife. "Yeah, they're just bickering right now... No, I don't know how much longer it will be."

They listen to Perle beat the drums of war. It leads to a discussion of democracy. He says that it would be good if Israel were surrounded by democracies. He says it would be good if Iraq were a democracy. "Democracies," Perle says to Russert, "do not engage in aggressive wars."

The dogs awake.

"What? Is this guy smoking crack?" one reporter nearly shouts. Everyone laughs and nods in agreement. The reporter expressed the frustration and outrage that millions of people around the world know, and what many journalists understand, but almost never articulate.

As I watched the interview, I wondered if Russert was also thinking, "What is he smoking?" I hoped he would say, "Well, Mr. Perle, either the laundry list of foreign aggressions in U.S. history (covert actions like those in Guatemala in 1954, proxy aggressions like in Nicaragua in the 1980s, and overt aggressions including Vietnam and Panama) are make-believe, or the United States is not a democracy. Which is it?" Russert never questioned the core of Perle's arguments: his assumptions on democracy, power, and violence. He moved on to the next topic. His silence spoke volumes.

The dogs go back to sleep.

The program ends. The reporters trudge outside and assume their positions. The first to pounce was the reporter who made the "smoking crack" comment. But she didn't pounce. She asked a generic question nearly identical to one Russert asked Perle. Perle gave a nearly identical answer. The reporters asked questions they already knew the answer to, and Perle handed them scripted answers (reporters sometimes do this so that on their broadcasts they can use their footage instead of a clip from a talkshow). Voila. News is made.

It's like a game with unwritten rules, but neither party wants to admit they're playing. Journalists are not dumb. Most of them have an idea of how the world works and how power structures operate. They are generally informed of world news. They have the ability to ask questions, like those on the minds of the millions of people who took to the streets weeks ago, yet most choose not to. They operate in a much larger system of corporate-controlled media, and must base their decisions on what they think is the best way to survive in that system.

Journalists who want to work for the national bureau of a major network know they must not only ask the right questions but also avoid asking the wrong ones. Asking hard questions could earn a reporter a reputation as a trouble-maker (it once could earn the reporter a reputation as a "muckraker"). There are rewards in this system for complacency. There are few rewards for critical thinking.

At that moment, I couldn't handle it. Moments earlier this reporter had seen through the lies. I wanted to grab her and yell, "YOUR COVER IS BLOWN. I know you aren't clueless. You know the truth, and you have no excuse for not speaking it."

Something had to be said, so I jumped in and asked, "Mr. Perle, you said that democracies do not engage in aggressive wars. Could you please explain, then, how you view this 'pre-emptive war,' against the will of the international community and millions of people around the world?"

I think it caught the reporters more off-guard than it did Perle. He avoided the question, and calmly said that this is not an aggressive war because Iraq has violated U.N. resolutions. He answered another reporter's question and walked away.

Next came Kucinich, and the situation repeated itself. The reporters repeated Russert's questions nearly verbatim. They were more aggressive with Kucinich, though, and I had trouble getting a question in. So, when Kucinich walked away, I followed him and asked a few questions about his vision for a Department of Peace in the federal government, which angered the other reporters.

"Why don't you come say that over here so we can all use it?" they



yelled. Kucinich didn't respond. "Fine," one reporter shouted, curtly. "Goodbye to you, too." We had broken the rules of the game.

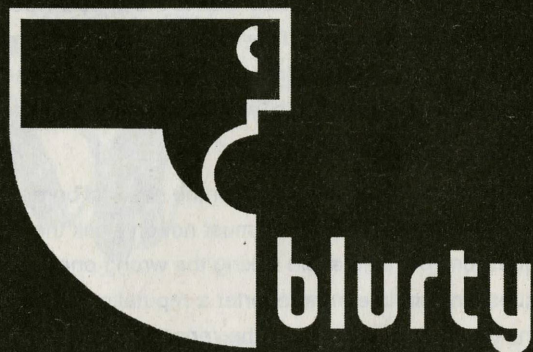
The behavior of some journalists is frustrating, but it is not enough to simply blame them for acting like lazy dogs. Journalists work within larger institutions that constrain them. [For more on these constraints, check out the propaganda model presented by Ed Herman and Noam Chomsky in *Manufacturing Consent* or in Herman's *Myth of the Liberal Media*.] They can, and should, push against the constraints of those institutions, but that is only a partial solution. We need media reform movements working to change the ownership and regulation of media. [For more on this, see the work of Robert McChesney (<http://www.robertmcchesney.com/>) and check out his new book with John Nichols, *Our Media, Not Theirs*.]

In a media system not dominated by corporations and money, it would be easier for journalists to do more than beg, roll over, and have their bellies rubbed. They could refuse to walk on a leash. They could bark, growl, and sometimes even bite. ❧

Will Potter is an intern for a national newspaper based in Washington, D.C. He has written for the *Texas Observer*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Dallas Morning News*. In his spare time he pays attention to politics and the state of American media. He can be reached at: will.potter@lycos.co.uk

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Peace Candidate Wants To Be President... And He's a Democrat?

by Josh Frank

Ohio Representative Dennis Kucinich on Monday, February 17th tossed his hat in the ring, announcing his bid to seek the Democratic nomination for President in 2004. Co-chair of the Progressive Caucus, wild-eyed Kucinich has been the most outspoken critic of the Bush administration's reactions to September 11th, the dismantling of our civil liberties under Ashcroft's Patriot Act, and the war against Iraq.

The former mayor of Cleveland who was elected to the House in 1996, Rep. Kucinich, has also been an outspoken advocate against our current Free Trade malfeasance, opposing Fast Track legislation in 1997 and 1998, as well as in 2002. He also claims that if elected, he would "repeal NAFTA" altogether. He states that, "NAFTA has attacked federal laws meant to protect worker rights, human rights and environmental quality principles." No other Democrat running for President has ever made such a critique. No question then that his support is strong among unions and environmentalists, garnering praise from the League of Conservation Voters, Public Citizen, among others.

Kucinich, a vegan, is also the most outspoken supporter of labeling genetically engineered and organic food products. As the key player in congress pressing for such labeling, he can be credited with the new federal labeling laws of organic foods passed in 2002.

When taking on huge corporate conglomerates such as big agriculture, Kucinich puts himself in the company of advocates like Ralph Nader. Similar to Nader, Kucinich has not stepped down from right-wing establishment leaning attacks, which have escalated since announcing his presidential bid. In fact, he has only accelerated his stabs at the Bush administration, asserting in a speech at the New York Peace March last February, "we will either bring an end to war, or we will bring an end to a war-like administration!"

Kucinich certainly is the loudest opponent of war among Democratic hopefuls. The only other anti-war candidate is the timid Howard Dean, who in February, announced he was against a unilateral strike against Iraq. But Dean is not opposed to any of Bush's other hawkish foreign policies, including that of Israel and Palestine. In fact, he is openly in support of the President when it comes to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. Kucinich, of course, is not.

Kucinich, a vegan, is also the most outspoken supporter of labeling genetically engineered and organic food products.

But Kucinich isn't perfect. He has only recently announced that he is pro-choice—this after years of voting with the pro-life cartel. His turnaround and his lingering anti-choice stances have yielded much criticism from feminist organizations and other pro-choice advocates. His past opposition to partial birth abortions, and his vote against Medicaid funding for this procedure, have also stirred quite a few controversies among the feminist movement.

The likelihood he will be able to overcome his change in position is grim. But Kucinich is counting on the backing of anti-war movement Kucinich to be enough to stir the Democrats in these early primary days.

Kucinich's popularity skyrocketed in February of 2002 when he gave a fiery speech in LA that lashed the Bush administration's pre-emptive strike philosophy. In his talk sponsored by *Southern California Americans for Democratic Action*, he blasted unilateral war, saying that we must stop the "fueling [of] a military industrial machine with the treasure of our nation, risking the future of our nation, risking democracy itself with the militarization of thought."

His small DC office was soon flooded with thousands of phone calls and emails thanking him for articulating the thoughts and concerns of those who have had no voice. His speech circulated by the millions in forwarded emails, and dozens of websites—a grassroots movement in our new cyber era. It seemed that Kucinich reached pin-up status literally overnight, giving him the confidence and courage to seek the Democratic nomination for President.

But come Election Day, if nominated, Kucinich may not be the only real peace candidate in the hunt for President. Ralph Nader and Global Exchange's Medea Benjamin have been rumored to be seeking out the Green's bid—and both would bring hefty anti-war stances. Right swinging Reform Party leader Patrick Buchanan is also anti-war, but few progressives would label Pat as pro-peace. The political climate may be quite different during election season, especially if the conflict in Iraq gets messy. If Kucinich can hurdle his anti-choice record, old Nader supporters, new progressives, and those angered at the lack of representation among the Democrats, will surely be tested as to whom they should support.

The primaries will be picking up full speed by July, with votes to come early next year. Our conflict in the Middle-East is bound to have multiplied by then, still bloody and unresolved. Spreading the word about Kucinich can only benefit the anti-war and anti-globalization movements—movements that until now lacked any political leadership in Washington.

No other Democrats currently have it like Kucinich—and Nader's not in the race yet. That may change, but right now it's all Kucinich. ☛

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A black and white illustration of a clown with a beard and a striped shirt, holding a gun. The text "JELLO BIAFRA" is on the left and "MACHINE GUN IN THE CLOWN'S HAND" is on the right.

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TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



Alpinestars • B.A.S.I.C. • Guidance Recordings • This Manchester duo composes tracks loosely based on electro beats and pop music. Many of their songs are full of layered synth passages and robotic beats, but they also feature acoustic guitars and mellow singing. It's a nod to krautrock and 80's electronica, perfectly blended. (AL)

Aphex Twin • 26 Remixes For Cash • Warp Records • This amazing double CD rounds up ten years' worth of Aphex Twin "remixes." The ever-unpredictable Richard D. James pays little if any attention to the original tracks before giving it a makeover (he has yet to hear the original versions of the two Nine Inch Nails songs remixed here). You can, however, detect a similarity to other work he was involved in at the time, from *Selected Ambient Works* to his *Analogue Bubblebath* series. Two new original tracks are also here, including a never before heard version of "Windowlicker." (AL)

Audima • Definition • 482 Music • Crossing the boundaries of indie rock, jazz, folk and prog-rock all in one sitting cannot overshadow the loungey, smoke filled pub kind of vibe on this release. The eleven tracks form one long story that takes repeated listening sessions to get to the bottom of. With song titles like "A Feeling Of Amazement And Fear Coupled With A Feeling Of Insignificance" and "A Difficult Situation That Will Provide Information About Somebody" you get the idea of what may be expected within. Tracks are broken down like chapters of a book, transcending accordingly into one another while the chirping of frogs, waves bashing upon shore, rainfall and thunder strikes all fill the soundscape with a natural, realistic feeling of actually being on the scene during this storyline as it takes place. The production obviously stands out and helps keep things together here, but the musicians really got creative and hopefully will get their time to shine someday. (JC)

Bluebottle Kiss • Revenge Is Slow • In Music We Trust Records • Sydney, Australia's Bluebottle Kiss won me over with the first song and had me sold by the second. With a quiet indie emo sound that feels different from most anything you gonna hear, but will remind you a little of Coldplay, and a confessional song writing style that brought the Red House Painters to mind as well, this CD is becoming worn with play already around here. Solid and amazing. (KM)

Cryptic One • The Anti-Mobius Strip Theory • Centrifugal Phorce Records • Laying tracks down with fellow underground teammates like Aesop Rock, Cannibal Ox and mainly the Atoms Family, Cryptic now delivers his debut solo disc of dungeon sounding beats and a versatile lyrical vision. On his own record label, Cryptic flows flawlessly overtop beats provided by himself, Blockhead ("Unicycle", "Bicycle" "Tricycle"), Blueprint ("Intricate Schemes") and Atoms Family partner Jestoneart ("Pulp Non-Fiction"). Much of this disc dives headfirst into the bounds of life and death, the running out of time and the irony of everything he's just said. On the hook of "Half-Life" he flows "half empty and half full, life vision is impaired, my life glass is always full, half with water, half with air." Without any hype to back this project, prepare to be surprised by the drum cymbal beats, horn loops, crisp treble hits and autopilot lyrical deliveries that fit like hand-in-glove with the production. I know it's early but this is the best disc I've heard yet this year, the complete album sound is consistent and nothing disappoints. (JC)

Deerhoof • Apple O' • Kill Rock Stars • I am christening a new musical genre: haiku rock, a hip new sound not unlike Cibo Matto or Le Tigre with attention deficit disorder. Lyrically, subject matter includes pandas, flowers, and playing cards, while the words are sung in such a way that they are almost indecipherable. The 5-7-5 haiku form is only a vague suggestion, not a hard and fast rule. Of course, any genre needs a standard bearer, and "haiku rock" has Deerhoof. This is one truly unique and entertaining album, so jump on the bandwagon while there's still room. (CL)

Fabulous Disaster • Panty Raid • Pink and Black Records • I love girl punk bands. I love this girl punk band. A superb blend of anger, sugar, and musicianship makes this a really fun disc to listen to. I don't say this simply because, based on their pictures, any member of this rockin' female combo could kick my lily ass. This is a really good pop-punk gem. (MK)

Intro5pect • self-titled • A-F Records • Pissed off at the state of music and how commercialized it had become, the quartet now known as Intro5pect formed. This was the winter of '97/'98. Now, five years later, the band has finally released a full album. What the hell were they waiting for?! This is brilliant, poignant, intense and original as hell. Instead of letting themselves be pigeonholed into a genre, they pull from several to create a genius sound. At the roots of their style are Brit punk influences, ala The Clash, but given strong consideration in the mix are American punk influences, ala Strike Anywhere, a political attitude that reminds me of Billy Bragg and Propagandhi and an electro-synth aspect that really flips the whole thing in a new way. The rapid-fire drum machine beats make the songs sound particularly urgent, and in most cases they are. They also make use of staccato keyboard strokes and infectious samples, once again adding an element to a traditional punk sound that is very unusual, but superb. It works! And philosophically, Intro5pect share their enlightened socio/political views through their incredible lyrics: "Give up, dumb down / forgetting all your dreams / so buy in, take out, / grabbing all you see" and "Winds of change are blowing / harder than you've ever seen before / they're pushing and they're pulling / straight to the company door." This is music worth listening to, understanding, absorbing and enjoying deeply. I think you'll agree. (CM)

Mad Caddies • Just One More • Fat Wreck Chords • You just can't have *Just One More*. You are going to want another and another and another. These guys are like potato chips - you won't be satisfied with just one. This is a disc which, while planted in the punk section of your local music mart, spans so many genres as to make classification useless. Tight musicianship and a pretty wild sense of humor makes this a great disc. (MK)

Prefuse 73 • One Word Extinguisher • Warp Records • Whereas hip hop artists take beats from other sources and loop them together to form a beat, Prefuse 73 (Scott Herren) takes it a step further and also borrows the vocals, ripping them apart until individual words are unrecognizable. Vocals take on the role of instrument. Just about every song has a disjointed feeling to it, like it was improvised on the spot with no forethought. He also collaborates with other "blip hop" artists Daedelus and Dabrye, downtempo groovemeister Tommy Guerrero and rappers Diverse and Mr. Lifer. (AL)

Rise Against • Revolutions Per Minute • Fat Wreck • This Chicago four-piece is a raging political punk band that deserves everyone's attention. Put them in a class with Strike Anywhere, The Lawrence Arms and Good Riddance, both in terms of their musical style and lyrical content. The vocals are strong, emotional and melodic while the music tears forward with tempo changes galore and irresistible hooks. They combine elements of power punk with hardcore to create a sound that is equal parts catchy and punchy. You'll be drawn in by a sick, addictive melody, only to be knocked in the face by a screaming chorus and huge guitar parts. And if it's not enough that they tear it up musically, their lyrics are bound to grab you: "Would God bless a murder of the innocents? Would God bless a war based on pride? Would God bless a money-hungry government? No!" Powerful music and poignant commentary — a match made in musical heaven. (CM)

Spearing Jocasta • self-titled • self-released • This release has the best problem possible, 3 songs were not enough, and leave you begging for more. Probably the most interesting hardcore release I've heard in a year or more. SJ venture off the tried and true hardcore pattern, but do it with delightful ease, making these songs interesting and amazing. I'm still pissed there are only 3 songs, but besides that damn this is good, and I guess they got the first rule of entertainment right, leave them wanting more. (KM)

The Majesticons • Beauty Party • Big Dada • There are concept albums and then there are EPIC concept albums. This is part of the latter. This is volume two in the trilogy involving the Majesticons. In part one, they battled the Infesticons. It was a dope confrontation and part two takes it to the next level. Mike Ladd is the mind behind this hip-hop madness, and it's brilliant, almost too hard to grasp. It's like one of those movies you need to watch three or four times before you get the whole plot figured out, that's just how deep this thumpin' shit gets. It's raw and soulful, sexy and rugged. It'll smack you upside the head and then stroke you down in bed. On the wild journey are such vocalists as Vast Aire (Cannibal Ox), Murs and E-I-P. Meanwhile, the beats are frantic to funky and the cuts are tight as fuck. There's a tad more R&B on here than I'd prefer (just a few tracks), but it's definitely top of the line as that genre goes and it's offset by so much good that I just have to deal. (CM)

The Silent Treatment • Twenty One • self-released • Silent these guys are not. Big hooks and bigger guitars dominate this five-song EP. There is a strong emotional component to both the music and lyrics, but don't let that scare you. These guys aren't about the whiny freshman poetry nonsense and the cliched emo arrangements; they just write intelligent and mature indie rock. As much as I enjoyed this disc, the Silent Treatment is even more powerful in a live setting. This comes highly recommended. (CL)

Various Artists • Small, My Table • Innocent Words • This disc is released on the sister label to Innocent Words Magazine, an Illinois-based publication which focuses on local and national independent music. It features mostly bands from the region, and it is a very diverse collection of exceptionally talented bands who have come together to serve a noble cause: a benefit for Riley's Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard lends a song from his debut solo CD, and Burden Brothers features former members of the Toadies and Reverend Horton Heat. Great compilation. (DP)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

CD releases

40 Grit • *Nothing To Remember* • Metal Blade Records • Contrary to what the title suggests, this album gives you something to remember, mainly the powerful combination of crushing riffs and melodic vocals. They took advantage of aural space during the recording, making this an excellent headphone listen. (AL)

5 Cent Deposit • *We Have Your Daughter* • Radical Records • I was hoping this band and the album that accompanied them wouldn't be worth what their name states. (It may sound mean, but I am faced with this problem many times) I was wrong. This band incorporates a style all their own on their Radical Records debut. Although it may not be my certain preference of genre, I appreciate the fast, energetic pop punk combined with the old school Operation Ivy type thrash vocals, backed by the everyday solos and harmonies all pop punk bands, as well as fans, seem to enjoy. I'm certain this band is to be a "shining star." The press that came with this CD was half the weight of my entire package of CDs. Any fan of Strike Anywhere, Digger, etc. will enjoy this band's catchy style and pointless lyrics. (CMAX)

Akari • *Ikara* • Scene Police • Lots of piano and then more piano. This is the perfect music to put on to get creative juices going. It definitely feels like something you could put on while your analytic, everyday life mind wanders and your creative mind paints a portrait or writes a poem. It's mood music at its best. Repetitive melodies that you can get lost in. It took awhile to get going, but it was a smooth ride to finally reach the vocals. The beginning could be classified as a little dramatic but it works. There are pop moments with synths and drum machines making it a soothing mix of electronic music. "My ego could crush a full grown man" brings acoustic guitar into the mix and sounded like it could fit into Radiohead *The Bends* realm. Shows artistic and creative music. (MP)

All Girl Summer Fun Band • 2 • K • I hate to say it, but this second album (hence the title) from AGSFB makes you want to get into a convertible and drive to the beach – any beach. It is in the grandest tradition of girl bands and releases on the K label – it's cute, poppy, gossipy and edgy, melodic and harmonic with major chords out the wazoo. It's just brimming with fun in its purest form. The album, though chock full of West-coast sensibilities, will certainly thrill girl rock fans across the nation. (DP)

Alva Star • *Alligators In The Lobby* • Parachute Adams • Alva Star is yet another in a long line of talented artists from the Twin Cities. Led by singer-songwriter John Hermanson, Alva Star serves up some very good indie guitar pop. The songs, superbly crafted with varied tempos and textures, are reminiscent of early-Wilco and Treble Charger. I don't know what they're doing up there during those cold Minnesota winters, but as long as they keep churning out bands like Alva Star I'm cool with it. (CL)

American Popular • *Sold Out (The American Way)* • Ironman Records • Sounding radio ready, and deservedly so, this edition of what has been done by the likes of Linkin Park, System of a Down, Disturbed and Chevelle is packed solid with guitar, chorus, guitar licks and wrenching vocals. The acoustic guitar comes out on "Even Though I Never Said" and again on "Mr. Trampoline" before getting back to normal (aside from drumbeats in the background) and showing the versatility within. What stands out here is the title track that looks into the American obsession with being popular. No reason this stuff here won't be the next big thing to hit music and video channels near you. (JC)

Andrea Maxland • *Paper Cut* • Montesano Records • I can't describe the relief I felt when I put this record on and didn't hear a woman on an acoustic guitar. Not that I don't like that sort of thing, but it's a little overdone. Everything about Maxland's music is refreshing. Indie-poppy with great rhythm and an amazing voice. Her vocals are sort of a mix between PJ Harvey and an angel. Not what angels are supposed to sound like, but what a punk rocker like me dreams they do. Maxland's songs share great arrangement and creativity. Pure fucking delight, as my friend would say. (KM)

Aphrohead • *Thee Underground Made Me Do It* • Clashback Records • Aphrohead is Felix Da Housecat's alter ego, resurrected once again to bring you this release. It is chock full of house and techno beats, somewhat similar to Daft Punk's *Discovery*. If not for the ultra-danceable songs, you'll want to get this CD for "Liquid Kitty," the song where a woman describes how she brings herself to orgasm in a rather matter-of-fact way! (AL)

Arab on Radar • *The Lost Singles* • Three One G Records • This CD rounds up singles, demo tracks and other never before release material by Arab on Radar. Their sound would fit in with bands on the Southern label, since they sound somewhat disturbing, with dissonant guitar lines and almost annoying vocals. (AL)

Awol One and Daddy Kev • *Slanguage* • Mush Records • With Awol One on the mic and Daddy Kev providing the beats, *Slanguage* takes you on a trip of exploration through free-jazz and hip hop. Songs go in all kinds of directions, sometimes with no direction at all. This is hip-hop for intelligent people with an interest in the experimental. (AL)

Bartles and Arpad • *The Republic Of Pluto* • Puff Records • This is a collection that pulls what was best from the dreary, distorted, industrial sound and grungy, spoken word vocals that have been created the past 10 years by these two gothic monsters. Mostly sounding like experiments left for the editing room, the basic music and over exaggerated stories makes this come off sarcastically. The tracks included come off as one-take outings that are good for what they are worth – a catalog of what you probably missed. (JC)

Before I Go • *Save Your Breath* • Apple Pi Records • This was the CD I listened to the most out of every CD I received to review. The outstanding mix of intertwining guitars, crashing drums beats, out of nowhere interludes, emotionally driven vocals, the overall structure of their material, and "harmonies kept me away from life, and away from the pain" (a possible excerpt from this CD). Besides that, this band is talented; they take all the emo/scream-o bands and literally blow them out of the water! With the right contacts and publicity this band will soon be sharing stages and MTV2 video spots with bands such as Thrice, Finch, Taking Back Sunday, and Rufio. Only one thing saddens me. Nobody wants another Dashboard Confessional, so lose the acoustic tracks and this CD is "off the chain, yo." (CMAX)

Benton Falls • *Guilt Beats Hate* • Deep Elm Records • This Santa Rosa trio seamlessly blends melody and aggression in *Guilt Beats Hate*. Songs that start out slow and melancholic suddenly change tempo, with fierce electric guitars and pained screams. This album is full of emotions, with guilt and hate among them. (AL)

Bi-Phonic • *Rockaholic* • Bi-Di-It Records • The press says, "Bi-Phonic is a five-member original rock band from NYC." Fair enough. But if they're so damn original, why do they start off their debut album with a cover song? Sure, it's an interesting take on Captain & Tennille's "Love Will Keep Us Together," but that's no excuse. From there, the quintet offers up truly original material – mostly a mix of standard fare melodic rock and heartfelt pop tunes. (CM)

birddog • *Songs From Willpa Bay* • Karma Records • Singer-songwriter Bill Santen has been the one constant through birddog's history. Each release features a rotating cast of supporting musicians who add their talents to Santen's alt-country style tunes. On birddog's latest effort, Santen is joined by longtime Sebadoh member Jason Loewenstein and Palace's Paul Oldham. The result is a solid collection of songs that recall Elliott Smith, who actually produced an early birddog single, and Freedy Johnston. (CL)

Black Eyes • *Black Eyes* • Dischord Records • I'm falling in love with the Girls Against Boys-esque swirling fuzz bass. It took me a few listens to get into this one, but then genius isn't always easily accessible. Besides the GVS's sound, I heard, for whatever reason, some Huggy Bear influence, and a full plate full of fellow DC bands of course. The sound of two drummers, two bassists, and only one guitar allows something quite diverse, subversive, and refreshingly new to emerge. (KM)

Bobí Céspedes • *Rezoz* • Six Degrees Records • With a voice similar to Celia Cruz, Cuban singer Bobí Céspedes creates music with Latin and afrobeat flavors laid over a pseudo-down tempo beat. Songs range from the catchy "California," to the groovy title track, sung to the Yoruba deity Obatala. Céspedes successfully brings together the ancient traditions of African religion, the flavor of Cuban music and the contemporary sound of American electronics. (AL)

Booze Monkey • *Good Luck Mr. Gorsky* • Sanity Check Music • What a great band name! This duo from Virginia plays acoustic blues-rock that is damn good. Blues isn't my favorite style, but it's obvious these cats know how to jam. These 16 tracks are a kick-ass collection of blues tunes that are full of soul, will get your toes tappin' and your eyes tearing up (kidding, of course). (CM)

Born From Pain • *Reclaiming the Crown* • Gangstyle Records • This is metal music. A solid wall of power and aggression that starts with your eardrums and then shreds your soul. Well, maybe not your soul. It is, however a good metal disc. If you like Machine Head and Obituary, then this is a disc that you will get into. Grinding riffs and thundering drums make this a powerhouse. (MK)

Boxing • *Way Down East* • Robert Barry Construction Associates • The vocals rub me so awfully that I have to try and get past them to make an attempt to give this record a fair review. There is something good here, sorta a classic rock feel to it (think more Beatles and Kinks and less Led

Zeppelin). A few of the styles they portray really come off well, vocals and all, but they slip into something else and it all goes to hell. The good spots make me want to love it so much, which makes the rough spots that much more disappointing. (KM)

Boy Sets Fire • *Tomorrow Come Today* • Wind-Up • For over eight years, BSF has been destroying the masses with their hardcore/indie rock assault. Their latest, the third full length from the Newark, Delaware five-piece, is a huge, pounding, chunky, aggressive release. On this album is a good mix of indie rock & roll tunes and full-throttle hardcore attacks. As he's always done so well in the past, Nathan Gray delivers important, timely socio/political lyrics through intensely screamed and emotionally sung vocals. Fans of BSF will not be disappointed by this release, despite this being BSF's push to reach a broader audience. And that new audience is bound to listen, or simply fall behind. (CM)

Burd Early • *Levele* • Western Vinyl • Compared to Early's debut album, there is a whole new level of quiet maturity here. A collection of sparse pictures of abandoned plans and deserted places, the loneliness seeps through this record. This one tree on the musical landscape is as stark as it is beautiful, with deadly silent pauses for contemplation and wrist cutting melodies. As beautiful as it is amazing. (KM)

Bury Your Dead • *You Had Me At Hello* • Eulogy Recordings • Talk about a short career. *You Had Me At Hello* is Bury Your Dead's first and only release, since they broke up in January. Too bad, because they could have gone far in the metal/hardcore genre. The guitars were ultra-heavy, and the singing was throaty and guttural. We'll just have to settle for one album. (AL)

Calibos • *And The Days We Spent Go On And On* • Handheld Records • What I like about this disc is how the music strays from its core and comes back in time to keep things in tact. This D.C. three-piece carries on the torch lit by Sonic Youth, The Feelies and The Velvet Underground by blending guitar noise and mellowed-out space jams to sound so natural. At times, things are comfortable and other times confusing, proving that solid production can go a long way. Lyrics and vocals fit the music just right; nothing is too hasty or too depressing to mess up what is being experimented with here. (JC)

Choleric • *Weed Out The Weak* • self-released • Choleric aggressively attack all who dare to listen, blending hardcore and death metal into one explosive combination. Think of early Fear Factory crossed with Pantera. Indeed, Stütchev's vocals can pull off Phil Anselmo grunts as well as Jonathan Davis's pained wails. (AL)

Choo-Choo Will Destroy You • *A Pivotal Maneuver In The War Against Your Mom* • Admit it: you enjoy childish, juvenile, politically incorrect humor. Choo-Choo is seriously wrong, juvenile, politically incorrect humor. Lyrically, they cover everything from masturbation to fighting elderly women to bringing Hitler back from the dead to anally rape somebody's cat. Clearly, they do not shy away from the pressing issues in today's post-9-11 society. Like Ween, Choo-Choo abuses a variety of musical styles from deranged carnival music to pseudo-metal. Give in to those childish, immature urges and get you some Choo-Choo. (CL)

Closer Than Kin • *The Machineries of Breath* • Punctuation Records/Artist Music Group • I liked this band so much that their name is valid in my case, for it kept me "Closer to it than my kin" for an entire day, possibly because their songs are incredibly long, detailed, and grueling but mostly because Closer Than Kin is the "hometown hero band" anyone and everyone wishes for. I always wondered what punk influenced instrumentals would sound like while being backed by thrashing hardcore vocals. Obviously, Closer Than Kin thought the same, for this is exactly what they provide on *The Machineries of Breath*. It even has a video on it, which I must say is freaky, but worth the watch! Having toured with such national acts as The Misfits, Death By Stereo and AFI, they're on their way to stardom and this may be their big break! (CMAX)

Clue To Kalo • *Come Here When You Sleepwalk* • Mush Records • Australian Mark Mitchell's work as Clue To Kalo takes laptop electronica a step further by adding heartfelt vocals to many of the tracks. There are both up and down tempo tracks here, with keyboard melodies reminiscent of Plone and Boards of Canada. (AL)

Cobra Verde • *Easy Listening* • Muscletone Records Inc. • Apparently people in Cleveland missed the train into the '80s and are stuck on the staples of the '70s including mass drug use, bad clothes, and 14 page press releases. Band members look like Tiny Tim and sound like retro cokeheads, this self proclaimed, "Last Rock Star" leaves a lot to be desired. If you like the '70s that much, save your money for the next KISS reunion tour. (RP)

Cursive • *The Ugly Organ* • Saddle Creek • Concept album is a phrase which strikes fear into the hearts of all but the most foolish of music fans.

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

But before you completely freak out, just remember that this is Cursive we're talking about here. All the elements that made you love them in the first place, the jarring bursts of guitar, the melding of dissonance and melody, the power of Tim Kasher's vocals, are all still here. *The Ugly Organ* is another step forward in the evolution of one of indie rock's finest artists. (CL)

Dan Jones • One Man Submarine • Leisure King • This is a heck of a cool, eclectic release from Eugene, Oregon's Dan Jones. The musical styles range from uptempo garage rock to jangly, singer/songwriter stuff. The vocals tend to be a little nasal and whiny at times, especially on the slower tunes. On the more upbeat stuff, the vocals are downplayed a bit. Overall, this is a solid release that journeys across a number of musical styles, but always seems to come home to jangly pop. (CM)

Daredevil • Tippin' The Scales Of Justice • Gangstyle Records • If you're looking to be aurally beat-down, throw this in your CD player. This five-piece from the Netherlands comes at you with a throaty, scream-o, chunky style of hardcore that simply doesn't quit. It's pounding, aggressive and violent. At the same time, Daredevil mixes in some catchy tempo changes and melodies that don't soften the intensity of the sound. (CM)

David Clement • Your Free Gift • self-released • Clement, formerly a solo acoustic vocalist, now joins up with a full band. His music is soft but certainly not weak, and it has an almost R.E.M. quality – thoughtful, harmonic, with full chords and well-polished vocals. His songs have been featured on TV shows such as *Dawson's Creek*, *Gilmore Girls*, and *Popular*, and on this record, he is resurrecting and rerecording several songs which were lost in legal limbo when Universal purchased Mercury/Polygram. Good for him – and us. (DP)

David Francis • David Francis • self-released • Weather pounding on a piano or strumming the strings raw on his guitar, nothing more distinguishes Francis other than the well-worn vocals that come off scratchy and painful at times. His style of lyrics and guitar work has been compared to that of The Beatles and Nick Cave, the vocal tone is a lot like what McCartney does; take it for what it's worth. The overall vibe of this disc is soothing, just not all in a good way; maybe as soothing as a lonely man can get, I suppose. (JC)

Diane Ward • The Great Impossible • Shinytown • This gem of an album from Florida singer/songwriter Diane Ward showcases her soaring voice, which has an Etheridge-esque edginess, tough and delicate, and is clear as a bell. She carries us through powerful tracks of desperate, emotional rock and soft pop with polished, perfect vocals as she explores the depths of the search for lasting love. A truly great and inspired accomplishment. (DP)

Douglass Kings • 3 Bucks • Evil Owl Records/Posing Toad Records • Douglass Kings are a two-piece drum and guitar rock outfit. This five song EP is their third release. The band mixes styles of many bands including Husker Du, The Dead Milkmen, and Hot Water Music. Fairly simplistic, but catchy and worthy of a listen. (RP)

Dressy Bessy • Little Music • Kindercore Records • I guess you could call this album a prequel. *Little Music* is a collection of early material by this Denver band. They would have happily existed in the 1960's, due to their catchy psychedelic pop melodies. However, their use of fuzz in their guitars brings them back to the present. (AL)

Dub Narcotic Sound System • Handclappin' • K Records • A mere five years have passed since Calvin Johnson and company's last release, *Out Of Your Mind*. DNSS continues on its quest to get geeky indie rockers

moving on the dance floors of America with this new four song EP. Heather Dunn's vocal debut on "Sabley Goodness" is one of the disc's highlights, as are the hip grooves on the closing number, "Mega-Clash (Version)". For those of you who cringe at the thought of Johnson's monotone delivery, have no fear, it's kept to a minimum on *Handclappin'*. My only question: why only four songs after a five year absence? (CL)

Duke Fame • Regrets • Geeves Records • Yeah, Duke Fame is named after an obscure character from the cult classic, *This Is Spinal Tap*. (That fact alone is worth some points in the mind of this reviewer.) There are no covers of classic Tap tunes like "Hellhole" or "Big Bottom", nor anything vaguely resembling '80s hair metal. This incarnation of Duke Fame revives the old Twin Cities Soul Asylum/Replacements sound, as if being covered by Tom Petty. *Regrets* is nothing revolutionary, just a solid alternative rock record. (CL)

Earl Mart • Everyone Down Here • Palm • Varied soundscapes characterize the uneven pace of this release. From ethereal slow jams to guitar-happy pop to noisy, raucous rock, Earl Mart's frontman Aaron Espinoza leads the listener on a magnificent journey. Each of the 12 tracks seems to flow from one to the next, a complete package. Grab your headphones and prepare for one hell of a trip. (CM)

El Guapo • Fake French • Dischord Records • I don't think I'm the target audience for this release. Dischord admits they wanted to challenge people "who thought a new Dischord band should sound like Fugazi." I'd say mission accomplished on that note; I'm challenged all right. Sorta a punk Devo dance act thing going on, more synth than you ever saw in the '80s. Of all the New Wave revival sounds, El Guapo pulls it off the best, this part I'm certain of. Good stuff, but nothing that's gonna stay in constant rotation for me. (KM)

Eleni Mandell • Country For True Lovers • Zedtone • Standard country for the most part, I wouldn't even put the prefix of "alt" in front of it. But with a voice like Mandell's, it's pulled off wonderfully. As a rule I pretty much never like female country vocalists, which makes it that much more amazing that this disc has gotten as much play around the office as it has. Everything a country record should have, a little bit of sadness, a little bit of sharp-tongued wit, and a touch of rural sexy. (KM)

Eleventeen • Intheair • Sessions Records • Eleventeen's offering is a tight, melodic, post hardcore rock effort with a pulsing backbeat. The comparisons that came to mind quickly were Errortype:11 and Ex-Number-Five. I love the conversational and almost confessional style of the vocals. Sessions Records has put out some great stuff in the past few months, and this keeps pace. With J Robbins at the helm, these boys seemed to have steered a decisive direction. (KM)

Endless Struggle • Till The End • A-F Records • A-F Records' Endless Struggle comes to you with their latest, and only God knows how many albums they have produced and what number this is, *Till The End* brings you the same typical Oi punk, that all Anti-Straightedge, Beer Loving, Anarchists come to love. Knowing that, however, this CD didn't rank high in my book. Endless Struggle brings to me songs that sound the same; every song has destructive vocals (you have to read the words to know what they're saying), swindling guitar solos, sing-a-long anthems and their lyrics are highly hypocritical. Any fan of the US Bombs and Antidote will totally dig this album. If you're not an "Oi Toy" then don't waste your time. I will tip my hat to them, though, for they are the only Oi band I have heard to have their drummer use a double bass pedal. Nice! (CMax)

Eric Idle • The Rutland Isles • iMUSIC • WARNING: If you are the kind

of person who hates Monty Python, skip the rest of this review because this CD is not for you. This "documentary" takes Eric Idle's Nigel Spasm character on a trip to the Overly Friendly Isles and a country called Paranoia. There's a music, jokes and interviews, all funny. (AL)

Faris Nourallah • I Love Faris • Western Vinyl • With sincerity and comforting melodies, this soloist has created a catchy Beatles-like pop album that is more mellow than perky. Organ and piano heavy songs are composed through the nostalgia of love, hope and desire that Faris fantasizes about during his self-imposed imprisonment inside the one-bedroom home and studio he lives at. Feeling the vibe of a 1960's era recording, this disc is balanced well with the low tempo atmosphere and accompanied by the tweaking of vocals and imaginative stories within each song. The only downer is that mid-way through things get a little tired, but the majority of this stands up well because chances are taken that remain true to the overall project making the down time manageable. (JC)

Four Tet • Rounds • Domino Recording Co. • On *Rounds*, Kieran Hebden shifts his attention from the folkloric sounds he explored, and moves into a study in repetition and melody. It seems like every song is centered around a simple, beautiful melody, which is eventually buried by more and more cacophonous sounds that tend to repeat until you are left in a hypnotized state. (AL)

Frankie Sparo • Welcome Crummy Mystics • Constellation Records • For his third release on Constellation, Frankie Sparo steps away from his introverted sound of past releases and enlists the help of N. Moss, now an official member of the "group." The music on *Welcome...* is still as intimate as his previous work, even when collaborating with other artists. This album represents growth in his sound, not a departure. (AL)

Full Court Press • Live Life Large • Gangstyle Records • Straight from Belgium with a mixture of hardcore, rap and metal, these guys have stayed busy promoting and recording their version of mixing rap and rock and may now stand out from the bunch. Much more edgy than what you'll find on the airwaves, aggression and attitude both flood this release, though there are a couple tracks that could crossover. Vocals are all the rage with the muffled "rah-rah-rah!" chants and then evenly switched around to a steady flow much like Suicidal Tendencies once did. This disc is pretty solid, not trying to be Limp Bizkit and not trying to be Pantera, just a little of each rolled into one, with a mean bass guitar to back it up. (JC)

Further Seems Forever • How To Start A Fire • Tooth and Nail Records • The title track gets this album going with a powerful start. It continues with the beautifully melodic structures they are known so well for. New vocalist Jason Gleason's first release with the band shows off his strong voice that can wail just at the right times and can definitely fill the shoes of ex-singer Chris Carrabba. That is apparent on some of my favorite tracks like "The Sound" and "Pride War." Even though I think Steve Kleisath is one of the most incredible drummers ever and the rest of the band follows him with their talent, this album lacks in the rock department and they don't seem to be using their talents to their fullest potential. There's a jazzy feel to some of the slower tracks like "A Blank Page Empire." It's not necessarily bad, but these tracks and the slower ones don't show the power of FSF and halfway through the album, my interest and attention is easily diverted. Don't get me wrong, the power of this emo-rock band is still very strong and with everything they've overcome, I think it can only grow from here. It didn't start a fire but maybe they lit a match. (MP)

G Lyle • self-titled • self-released • I had never heard an R&B demo before this CD arrived. It's just what you expect, too. It's a rough, raw recording, desperately in need of polishing given the genre. It's simply too minimal and that stands out like a sore thumb. The vocals aren't bad, but the lyrics are so typical of "sex me up" R&B that I'm really turned off. (CM)

Green Rode Shotgun • self-titled • self-released • This quintet from Tennessee plays rock and roll that has both country and punk influences. They dance between pop and classic rock, using plenty of guitars and strong vocals that sit on top of the music. Throughout the 11-track debut album are layered melodies balanced by creative tempo changes. (CM)

Harry Manx / Kevin Breit • Jubilee • Northernblues Music • This is a far cry (and a nice change) from the piles of punk and hardcore discs which sit in front of me. Here are two talented and presumably barefoot musicians who play an exquisite blend of acoustic folk & blues. There is a slight tinge of country inevitable in this style of music, but this is honest music that you can listen to and enjoy any time. A mellow and enjoyable trip through the countryside. (MK)

Hello Amsterdam • How Are You? • Spy Hop Records • Named for an American Music Club song, Hello Amsterdam hails from Amsterdam's social antithesis, Salt Lake City. While Hello Amsterdam shares little musically with AMC, they do have a common emotional element in their

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slater - all my favorite rockstars are dead
dark rock and roll with pop sensibilities from beantown

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songwriting. Hello Amsterdam's songs are more in the indie/emo style than AMC's material, and have a very mature and polished sound. In addition to being a record label, Sky Hop is a non-profit multi-media school in Salt Lake City founded by Hello Amsterdam's bass player, Erik Dodd. (CL)

Hodge Podge • *Melodies And Maladies* • Hodge Podge Productions • John Kachnowski and Pauly Moonbeam mesh together sounds of ska and electronica on this six-track release. On the track "Carpet Diem" things change a bit compared to the first three tracks that are mostly ska and Jimmy Buffett rolled in one. Much of this disc comes off as a demo that serves as an experiment with direction before releasing their full length. Trombones and keys are used heavily alongside the vocals of Kachnowski. (JC)

Houston Marchman & The Contraband • *Desperate Man* • Dos Hermanas Music • Houston is a great storyteller and The Contraband compliments this country singer/songwriter with a natural feeling. The opening track "\$2 Pistol" shows promise that this disc is true to its roots and is reminiscent of the early days of Hank Sr. and Johnny Cash, but is more of an introduction to the desperate, mellow sound that comes thereafter. This is mostly folkish country music. Elements of blues are there and added with just the right touch. Much of this chronicles the up and mostly down times of a desperate man in turmoil over his family, his life and a girl or two. (JC)

Ill Kidd • *Album Title T.B.A.* • Ruff Nation Records • Everlast may never be remembered for his House Of Pain days all because he picked up a guitar and later spawned many knockoffs of a sound we'd much rather forget. From the opening track this 'Kidd' rhymes over pop-hop beats with cheesy turntable scratches and a before mentioned Everlast-influenced acoustic bit of affection. Entirely produced by Kidd, lyrics are full on getting buzzed, talking trash and boasting about his California upbringing. Throw in the hard-to-miss influences from Sublime and G. Love and you've got yourself a new battle cry for suburban youth - now that's gangsta! (JC)

Inventing Edward • *We've Met An Impasse (By Midnight We'll Be Naked)* • Substandard Records • Epic side-project action from members of Under A Dying Sun that has a dark indie feel that gets inside your bones. Full of the pitch of creative guitars lost on a walkabout layered with great ghost-like vocals and a beat that keeps everybody in touch; this recording should be kept away from the clinically depressed. The rest of us can enjoy a journey into the human psyche and come out better for the trip. "Fuck Being Buried Alive" gets the award for best song title I've heard in awhile. (KM)

Jackie Cooper • *The New Mood* • No Karma Recordings • With hypnotic vocals and eerie guitar work to start this seven track collection, the tone is set for an experimental soundscape of many styles. "Eclipse" follows suite with a heavy organ and percussion collaboration that makes the change from the first track to the next feel as natural as breathing air. A violin strangled interlude follows before the drumbeat laced "Momento" kicks in. Distorted guitar work is up next and on "After The Catapults" acoustics take center stage. Though the vocals could have been more crisp, the diversity on this disc will keep you looking for their next release. (JC)

Jim Laslett • *Elysian Fields* • Chaucer • This debut CD from British artist Jim Laslett features rich, full, soft music with a broad array of accompaniment. Mandolin, drums, sax, and acoustic, electric, and bass guitar merge seamlessly and dreamily with Jim's wonderful vocalization. He is a lad of seven and twenty years, having performed for many years in London, and he is just beginning to build a fan base in Europe. (DP)

Jim... • *Hollywood Tire* • Recluse Records • Though *Hollywood Tire* opens up with a very funky pair of songs, it doesn't make Jim... a one trick pony. Funk is their best genre, but they also tackle balladry, country western, honky tonk, reggae, and straight up rock and roll. (AL)

Julie Doiron • *Broken Girl* • Jagjaguwar • Billed as the long lost recordings of former Eric's Trip player and solo artist Doiron, this collection of old 7's and hard to find recordings plays as found treasure. The perfect quiet apartment filler for a soft Saturday afternoon. Mellow guitars and vocals that tickle the borders of sadness and joy. This one's really quite a gem. (KM)

Kid Brother Collective • *Highway Miles* • One Day Savior Recordings • This starts off so very emo with the vocals and lyrics and even a phone call to which the message on the answering machine is sung. There are elements of Mineral and Elliot in the vocals and musically. It has the emo rock formula where it's very slow and dramatic and then builds up to a stop and then the rock comes in and it stays for more tracks. I would recommend this to anyone that is a fan of Deep Elm bands like Camber and Brandtson. (MP)

Leviathan • self-titled • Judas Cradle Records • The first band that pops into your head when you listen to this CD is Danzig. Not only does Shane

Tierney sound like Glenn Danzig, but Mike Otero's guitar work comes close to John Christ's. These guys know how to rock, and they're not afraid of you. (AL)

Lisa Germano • *Lullaby for Liquid Pig* • iMUSIC • With a sultry, resigned voice and haunting melodies, Lisa Germano gets under your skin and refuses to leave. The album has a smoky feeling to it, and Germano sounds like she is singing very close to your ear. The album is thus somewhat unsettling, but you are unable to stop listening. (AL)

Lorelei • *Our Minds Have Been Electrified* • Ice-Made • Bass, how low can you go? The Pittsburgh-based trio Lorelei doesn't need any pansy ass guitars. Instead, they bring the rock with two basses, with results not unlike a Sonic Youth or Unwound. The two bass attack works surprisingly well. One bass locks in with the drums to form a solid foundation, while the second bass navigates the higher registers like an angry Peter Hook. Mix in the fierce vocals of Susannah Mira, and you've got a potent batch of aggressive, energetic indie rock. (CL)

Mallory • *The First One Hundred Years* • self-released • Mallory's debut album, *The First One Hundred Years*, is a collage of sounds best described as post-punk, but not limited by it. Two guitarists and a drummer make layered textures, every once in a while adding vocals and keyboards, resulting in a space-rock feel. (AL)

Manitoba • *Up In Flames* • Domino Recording Co. • Dan Snaith is sick of electronic music, because he says it all sounds the same. His second album, *Up In Flames* aims to change the face of the genre. In fact, you might think this album was done with a full band. His songs are layered and textured, like recent Chemical Brothers stuff. (AL)

Many Birthdays • *35 Minutes* • Red Cake Records • Starting off, I'm loving the cover artwork. Many Birthdays have a way about them that sounds like a sort of modern new wave, without the annoying excitement that bands like The Faint and The Black Wave have. Mellow and chill, kinda quirky, and eclectic as hell. This will keep you interested. (KM)

Many Birthdays • *The Abstract Door* • Red Cake Records • Though much of this is a home recording of instrumental collages and trippy vocals with tripped-out sounds, this experiment comes off like a work of genius. *The Abstract Door* is unique; much of the noise is compiled neatly by the use of organs, synthesizers, strings, snares and wound tight by the mess of wind-up toys, downtown and living room sound bites, loops, cuts, echoes and a bit more for good balance. Sound quality is better than expected for a home recording and the more far-out this gets with style the better it becomes. The originality within is refreshing and makes this a definite keeper; think of early Beck for comparison. (JC)

Mark Austin Band • *Cosmic Trigger* • self-released • This is an eclectic pop mix using many sounds, from flowing, trippy guitars to blaring horns to pounding drum rhythms. It's a combination of classic rock and acid jazz that comes across like a jam session. Musicians will particularly enjoy this creative 10 track debut from the Dallas, Texas based seven-piece. (CM)

Moon Spank • *Just Another Day* • Mr. K Records • Commenting on the vocals, my friend Brett says, "It's Dave Matthews meets Eddie Vedder meets Jackson Browne." And I don't think he's being particularly complimentary. This is your standard rock fare — jangly guitar, too much vocals with too much forced emotion. I will say, there are some creative and original parts to this with strong songwriting, but the genre is overplayed, to me, and, despite the lengths they go to "spice it up," it still doesn't get my attention. (CM)

Moral Crux • *Pop Culture Assassins* • Panic Button • Ahhhh, the joys of social upheaval with a catchy pop punk beat. "Window Shopping With A Brick" should be the Wal-Mart theme song. This is a good disc filled with catchy riffs and smooth vocal harmonies, but there is still a gritty edge to the music which keeps it from falling into that lollipop type of pop punk. Good music to smash things to. (MK)

Nineteen Forty-Five • *I Saw A Bright Light* • Daemon Records • *I Saw A Bright Light* is the second full-length release from this Birmingham, Alabama trio. With their driving guitars, male/female vocals, and melancholy slow tunes, Nineteen Forty-Five sounds like an edgier Small Factory. Solid from start to finish, there's not a bad song among the eleven tracks. Who thought Alabama could crank out some serious indie rock? (CL)

odd nosdam • *No More Wig For Ohio* • Anticon Records • cLOUDDEAD member odd nosdam has his own way of making music, and it is evident on this CD. Divided into two parts, it features 24 untitled tracks that flow from one to the other in a weird way. Samples of organs, video games, old '80s songs and other found sounds populate this album, all layered over sick hip hop beats. (AL)

Oddballs' Band • *Oddballs' Shit Explosion '94-'99* • Weird Science Records • This is truly an explosion of sound, with Oddballs' Band providing some authentic blues, infused with some punk attitude. Com-

piled from 1994-1999, this CD includes mostly unavailable stuff from vinyl-only recordings, and some other unreleased tracks. The liner notes are pretty extensive, giving you more insight into the band. (AL)

Oddjobs • *The Shopkeeper's Wife EP* • Third Earth Music • Credentials include working with Slug, Eyedea, Aesop Rock and Vast Aire and none of it came to happen by ever compromising what they stand for. With three emcees (Crescent Moon, Advizer, and Nomi) and two DJ/producers (Deetalk and Anatomy) the Oddjobs have put together a recipe only an acquired taste could appreciate. Right away The Roots musical sound and De La Soul's brain come to mind. The drumbeats are infectious and the soundscape is layered in different elements while the rhymes are delivered at will and offers plenty of thought food to take in. These guys came together in Minneapolis and have since been building their sound every stop along the way. These six tracks will only force you to find their first full length *Drums*, and that's not a bad thing either. (JC)

Panty Lions • *So Dang Rad* • Amazing Grease Records • Two piece male and female duo action that takes the form of a road trip turned crime spree in my mind, as it wanders and swells. Subtle, uncomplicated and easy like a country road in the spring, and just as beautiful. When I say I like these songs, I mean "Damn, I like these songs!" If you're in Pavement, Elliot Smith, or The Microphones I would check this out in an instant. (KM)

Past Mistakes/Red Winter Dying • *Split-CD* • The New Beat • It's not really evident anywhere on the label that this is a split CD, so I was a little thrown off when poppy-emo core morphed unexpectedly into metalcore. Upon the second listening I can tell you PM plays a nice emcore style that reminds me of Thursday, while their mates RWD are a hard hitting durge sort of thing. Both are good, but nothing that's gonna rock your socks into the night. (KM)

Pelican • self-titled • Hydra Head Records • If you like bands like Five or the Fucking Champs, then you owe it to yourself to check out Pelican. This instrumental quartet deals in doom metal with some of the lowest rumbles in music. The slow to medium tempo will put you in a trance you may never want to get out of. (AL)

Petracovich • *Blue Cotton Skin* • Red Buttons Records • Not to be confused with anybody who plays basketball for the Sacramento Kings, Petracovich (alias, Jessica Peters) comes off as a sleepy Portishead that missed the chance to put her star in the 4AD Records constellation when it was around. The electronic drumbeat keeps it flowing, the guitar, vocals, and keyboards keep it interesting. A few moments where the music wants to lag are buffered overall by an interesting musical conversation. (KM)

Pivot • *Where The Debris Meets The Sea* • Purple Skunk Records • In the South Florida indie music scene, many bands can play six degrees of separation with Dashboard Confessional's Chris Carrabba. Pivot lost a bass player to Dashboard, and singer-guitarist Rob Helmsong was Carrabba's guitar tech on an early Dashboard tour. Small world, ain't it? Well, Pivot's back with two new members and a six song EP featuring their tight, melodic indie rock that sounds like something out of the Vagrant catalog. (CL)

Pop Culture Casualties • *They're Only Doing It To Get Attention* • self-released • These guys look like they just fell out of an ad for The Gap. That notwithstanding, the disc is pretty good pop music. It has a feeling of Barenaked Ladies meet They Might Be Giants meets REM. Strong song structures combine with talent and humor to make this an enjoyable disc. Very catchy and fun. (MK)

Punchline • *The Rewind EP* • Fueled By Ramen • Catchy guitar riffs with even catchier hooks in the vocals. Harmonies combined with melodic pop punk reminded me of Midtown. The vocals are really strong but sometimes the talky screams sound out of place on the first track. The screams seem to find their place by the second track though, which I think is named "Rewind," and they add a bit of aggression to this four song EP. The placement of keys is perfect and gives them a little bit of their own sound in the world of multi harmony indie pop punk bands. All in all, it's rock n' roll for the soul. (MP)

Redline vs. Born From Pain • *Swift, Silent, Deadly* • Gangstyle Records • Each band recorded three songs for this split album. New Jersey's Redline sees a more metal influence in their heavy hardcore sound, while Born From Pain keeps a more old school attitude. Both bands are heavy as hell, full of double kick drums and crushing guitars. (AL)

Richard Youngs • *Airs Of The Ear* • Jagjaguwar • It is a fitting album title for such a light, flowing, ethereal release. Youngs' vocals are breathy, wafting over varied sounds, mixing a folk sound with a new wave influence. I imagine myself in a Buddhist village or a Far East ritual dance. It's rather emotionally-charged and really heavy stuff, a bit too much so for my likes. (CM)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Right Direction • *Beyond the Beyonds* • **Gangstyle Records** • Strap on your crash helmets and stick your head between your legs. 37 minutes and 32 seconds of furious hardcore. This is music, however, not simply screaming with a thunderous beat. Groove beats reminiscent of Biohazard mangle with straightforward fury like Litmus Green. (MK)

Rock Kills Kid • *self-titled* • **Fearless Records** • This six-song EP is run-of-the-mill pop punk in the same vein as Lit and Ten Foot Pole. Definitely not ground breaking material by any means but quite radio friendly. If you like Fat Wreck Chords style melodic punk of the late '90s, these guys are worth checking out. (RP)

Rogue Wave • *Out Of The Shadow* • **Responsive Records** • Zach Rogue is the mind behind the music on this release. It's a singer/songwriter album with a mix of both acoustic and pop pieces. The vocals are solid and sound a bit like Paul Simon and Elliott Smith. The songwriting is strong, as well; Zach has crafted some artful and enjoyable pop tunes. (CM)

Sandman • *Long Ride Home* • **Loner Records** • Billed as something of a cross between rap and country, I would disagree. This is stripped down singer/songwriter music and it is haunting and beautiful. It most immediately reminds me of Lou Reed back in his bad old days. This is a really great disc that tells a story and tells it so well that you will listen to it again and again. (MK)

Saturday Looks Good To Me • *All Your Summer Songs* • **Polyvinyl Records** • Even though I was not around during the '60s, I've seen enough K-Tel commercials to know that Saturday Looks Good To Me really, really likes the era's music. Their sweet, psychedelic pop music recalls the girl bands of the day, as well as Motown's sound. There is, however, a punk attitude bubbling under the surface. (AL)

Sciflyer • *self-titled* • **self-released** • Sciflyer's lo-fi instrumental space rock is full of fuzzy guitars and reverb. I heard vocals on a couple of tracks, but they were full of echo, making them hard to understand. The songs could have stood on their own without the vocals. You will be hypnotized into staring at your shoes by these six tracks. (AL)

Seville • *Take Me Home* • **Purple Skunk** • Back from the edge of breaking up, Chris Druke has made this a solo project of sorts, and is back playing the brand of sappy songs that make the girls swoon. The offering of 10 songs is decent, and grows on you a bit with time. Good diversity helps it stay interesting, and the rework of the old Seville staple "Waking Up" is great. Whatever incarnation, Seville is always worth a listen. (KM)

Shermy D • *Long Leggy & Lucious* • **Nook & Cranny Records** • Shermy D (hailing from Gainesville, Florida) is part Beastie Boys, part Bloodhound Gang — combined, he's one of the most irresistible one-man bands you'll ever hear. He's plenty hip-hop combined with an appreciation for sampling, particularly from familiar rock music. Shermy D might be fakin' the ghetto flavor, but his knack for pumping out catchy, rap songs is hard to deny. And if you doubt the level of enjoyment he can deliver, you've got to see this man work it live. (CM)

Silent Kids • *Tomorrow Waits* • **Two Sheds Music/Cur On A Glider Records** • If it were 1998, you'd swear Silent Kids were yet another member of the Elephant 6 collective/extended family. The Atlanta-based quartet's psychedelic pop is similar to that of Elf Power and the Apples in Stereo, though the comparisons don't quite do *Tomorrow Waits* justice. Silent Kids build upon the lo-fi pop foundation to create their own distinct sound and one of the great albums of 2003 so far. (CL)

Since By Man • *We Sing The Body Electric* • **Revelation Records** • This album explodes right out of the gate, but soon proves Since By Man to be a versatile hardcore band. Melodies are not foreign territory, sometimes coming close to The Applesseed Cast's latest stuff. However, they can be

as intense as Converge, so you can tell these guys can do it all. (AL)

Smoking Popes • *The Party's Over* • **Double Zero Records** • The Popes were kings of the Chicago underground scene for a good portion of the 1990s, but after having artistic differences, the band split up. This is their final album, recorded in 1998 but previously unreleased. Josh once again croons himself silly on lead vocals and the music is pretty catchy. But the album is cover songs, and that doesn't really do it for me. I was hoping for more original material. Artists covered include Judy Garland, Patsy Cline and Willie Nelson. (CM)

Snowdonnas • *Over Now* • **Ballyhoo Withdrawal Records** • Formerly known as the Transmitters, Snowdonnas incorporate British rock influences with pop melodies and shoegazer atmospheres to create a beautiful yet biting sound. Lush keyboards blend with electric guitars wonderfully, complemented by Tim White's laid-back vocals. (AL)

Sorry About Dresden • *Let It Rest* • **Saddle Creek** • I'm sure the indie rock kids will love this one but I'm not sure it compares to some of its label mates. Some of the catchy melodies grab you, but then the vocals let you go almost immediately. There are also some all-country moments from this Chapel Hill quartet. "Candid Camera" is a rock driven track that perked me back up. Maybe this album is one of those "you have to listen to it a few times to really appreciate it and then it grows on you like fungi." I'm not sure, but for me it was disappointing and droning. What can I say, Sorry about Dresden? I sure am. (MP)

Soul Supreme • *The Saturday Nite Agenda* • **Grit Records** • Using a '70s setting, this hip-hop compilation gives a taste of some of the best new MCs along with some of the veterans. Producer Soul Supreme, from Sweden, is the mastermind behind this release and it's one heck of a project to pull off. Featured on this 13-track release are such greats as KRS-One, Big Daddy Kane and Pete Rock. While those guys show why they are considered some of the best in the game, some of the "rookies" show they've got plenty of skills. The newcomers include T-Max, Reks & Noel and Checkmark. This is definitely a worthwhile listen that will light up the party and blow your mind. (CM)

Sounds Familiar • *self-titled* • **Weird Science Records** • This band's name, as well as many I have reviewed in the past, have a certain irony to them and the reasoning behind their name is self-explanatory. Sounds Familiar is something of which had to be thought of hard and took years to create. Blending the styles of such bands as At The Drive In, Jimmy Eat World, and even The Juliana Theory (they hardly sound like anyone, this is just a rough comparison), this band goes from emo to garage rock, and then swings over to a little touch of hardcore. Their heartfelt lyrics, backed by their musical talent and infectious songs, leave me wanting more than the seven songs I was given. I used to hate this style, but after popping this into my CD player, my mind has opened up to the talent of such bands and I know that I will be hearing from this band in the future. (CM)

Soundtrack Mind • *Plastic Dreams* • **Shut-Eye Records** • These guys were named "Athens Best Pop Band" in 2002 and it's fitting. They play that Athens style of college rock that is loaded with jangly guitars and mid-tempo beats, combining a rock and roll sound with country elements. Soundtrack Mind does a great job with it. They have already had a good amount of college radio success and this release should only garner them more acclaim. (CM)

Southkill • *self-titled* • **Noreaster Faded Industries** • It is hard to believe that this music is made by just two guys. Their instrumental songs pack quite a punch, with layered electric guitars and syncopated beats, which put you in a trance, right from the beginning of the first song. (AL)

Stairwell • *The Sounds Of Change* • **Hopeless Records** • Pop-friendly power punk that sounds like a deformed Jimmy Eat World. There just isn't enough of anything original or even good immolation going on to grasp hold of here. With that in mind, it's catchy, and listenable in the opening band sort of style. (KM)

Stalag 13 • *In Control* • **Dr. Strange Records** • I'm embarrassed to admit that despite being into hardcore in the '80s, I'd never heard of these guys. Hey, it happens. Luckily for me, they were smart enough to re-release this and coral the fans they missed the first time

around. With a hardcore/skate-core sound that fits perfectly with the other bands of the day (7 Seconds, Instead, JFA, and even the early Bad Religion stuff) these songs play well now. Sometimes, as good as it was, the hardcore of the '80s sounds a little off to the modern ears (as good as it was back in the day). Stalag 13 is happily welcomed back from the dead. (KM)

Stalins War • *Demos* • **self-released** • I haven't heard screamo-hardcore out of Southern California this good since the early '90s. Damn these kids bring the energy and then some. The music is a devilish mix of hardcore, metal and punk roots, and the vocals are my favorite mix of screams and melodies. Stalins War is one of those bands that is relentless, intense, and fire-branded, and one of those bands you want to keep hearing from for years to come. (KM)

Standstill • *The Ionic Spell* • **Level Plane** • European hardcore with melodic breakdowns. Don't worry, they didn't forget their talking breakdowns either, which could be called melodic interludes. What would a hardcore band be without some statement they feel the need to say instead of screaming or singing? Keyboards are used to give it a little bit of original flare. The track "Naked Monkey" is similar to System of a Down and gives it a more metal feel. Nothing innovative here, but they are good at what they do. They show how tough they are from the very red and black CD layout. This five piece from Spain is worth any hardcore listener's time. (MP)

Sterling • *self-titled* • **File 13 Records** • Chicago's Sterling might take some cues from metal and hard rock, but their music is not as aggressive. Their instrumental compositions are pretty much all in the medium tempo range, with a few explosions here and there. The use of piano to complement the guitar adds melancholy to the already spooky mood. (AL)

Stick Figure Suicide • *Mission* • **Break Even Records** • This is a punk outfit which obviously has talent. It is a short disc - 11 songs and 25 minutes. There is nothing here as far as the music goes that has not been done before. They obviously are passionate about what they do and it is a good disc. (MK)

Striking Distance • *The Bleeding Starts Here* • **Reflections Records** • SD do their part to bring back '89, that's for sure. Old School hardcore, stripped down and ready to take a few shots to the head in the circle pit. There are some great tunes here, but nothing classic. (Save a Minor Threat and a Void cover, but those aren't their classics.) Something about the mixing makes the band sound too trebly, and makes what should be pretty tough stuff come off kinda wimpier than it should. That in mind, I like this record. (KM)

Superdead 54 • *Engineering of Anxiety* • **self-released** • Like a group of crazed, genre-defying zombies, Superdead 54 has emerged from the San Gabriel Valley to bring you deranged rock. Most likely, Superdead 54 would fall under the generic "punk rock" umbrella, though punk is just one ingredient in their sonic stew. There's a twisted electricity running through their songs, and a sense that something is slightly off with these guys. *Engineering of Anxiety* is the bastard child of the Dead Kennedy's and Devo, but don't get too hung up on the pedigree, just enjoy the ride. (CL)

Swingin' Utters • *Dead Flowers, Bottles, Bluegrass, and Bones* • **Fat Wreck Chords** • It was about time for another Swingin' Utters record, and it was worth the wait. This time they added Spike (Me First and the Gimme Gimmes) on vocals, making for a total of three vocalists. The result is a bar-friendly, highly infectious set of melodic punk tunes. After all, what other punk band can add violin, viola, accordion and piano and get away with it? (AL)

Swissfario • *Boxed* • **Datawaslost Records** • Like so many lo-fi bands, Cincinnati's Swissfario began as a bedroom recording project and gradually emerged as a full-fledged indie pop band. Their first full-length release, *Boxed*, features strong pop sensibilities and fuzzed-out guitars throughout the twelve tracks. The songs are catchy and concise, avoiding the tendency to overuse a great hook. Always leave 'em wanting more, right? This is some damn good indie pop. Apparently Dayton has some competition to the south for Ohio's lo-fi pop crown. (CL)

Tangiers • *Hot New Spirits* • **Sonic Unyon Records** • Has the official anti-garage band movement begun yet? If so, nobody's told Tangiers. Their debut full-length album *Hot New Spirits* is an energetic effort with tight performances of garage rock. If you're prone to fits of violence by the mere mention of the Strokes, avoid this album at all costs. Conversely, if you can't get enough of those crazy garage sounds that are driving the kids wild, run to the nearest record store (do they still call them record stores?) and grab yourself a copy of *Hot New Spirits*. Which side are you on? (CL)

Tart • *self-titled* • **Smart Girl Music** • Seattle's Tart is comprised of four rockin' women ready to hook you with infectious indie rock tunes. Three of the girls are sisters who grew up singing together and have formed Tart, along with another girl, to speak their minds and share their musical skills. Some tunes are a bit haunting and aggressive while others are a

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tad more poppy. Overall, this is a damn fine album from a quartet of young women who seem motivated, capable and prepared to unleash their sound on the masses. (CM)

Ted Leo & the Pharmacists • *Hearts of Oak* • *Lookout! Records* • *Hearts of Oak* is the follow up to 2000's *The Tyranny of Distance*, and in it Ted Leo reunites with the Pharmacists for thirteen tracks of bouncy, radio-friendly indie-pop. He is punk in an Elvis Costello way, and his songs are mixed like they used to in the '60s, with the instruments panned to different sides (drums to the left, bass to the right). (AL)

Terminal 4 • *When I'm Falling* • *Truckstop Records* • Terminal 4 does not play your average pop song. They use cello, piano, melodica, and trombone, in addition to guitar and bass to create their dramatic sound. The first instrument that grabs your attention is the trombone, which along with the cello creates a melancholic mood that permeates the entire album. (AL)

Terminus Victor • *Mastering the Revels* • *Innocent Words* • *Mastering the Revels* kicks things off with the Ministry-influenced "Bright and Early Persuasion," and it doesn't slow down for the next 37 minutes. Aside from their Ministry-influenced, somewhat industrial sound, you'll also find a fondness for Monster Magnet and sludge rock guitar work. (AL)

The Adventures of Jet • *Muscle* • *Suburban Home Records* • As I listened this CD, I just could not stop from smiling and bobbing my head up and down. I think it is the extremely catchy nature of this band's music, especially the use of keyboards to accent the sweetness of their power pop compositions. (AL)

The Beautys • *The First Seven Inches Are Always The Hardest* • *Dia-phragm Records* • Get your mind out of the gutter! The title of this CD refers to 7" records, you perv. All twenty-two tracks were compiled from hard to find recordings, compilations, and other unreleased material of fast-paced, female-fronted sleazy punk rock. (AL)

The Bottlehouse • *Joy Of Life* • *Aquarium Records* • This is good ol' Americana rock with both male and female vocals keeping it interesting. The tempo moves between slow and mid, while the music backs up the solid singing. It reminds me of a slower version of Matchbox 20 (with male vocals). They have crafted 13 tunes that are full of hooks and country influences and they'll get under your skin if you're not careful. (CM)

The Boxing Lesson • *self-titled* • *Send Me Your Head Records* • Four songs that only make a slight first impression on me. Gentle and daring, creative and moving, but not really enough to take me anywhere. This boxing lesson is one of something quiet and deadly; the name is all irony for sure. I'm fond of "Every Bite Tastes the Same" and the track "Hard To Fake." In the end I wanted more, in an effort to develop a better relationship with this music. (KM)

The C'nts • *La La La* • *Disturbing* • The asterisk is theirs, not ours. Difficult to classify, and that's the way they like it. But, I'll try - we've got a minor-keyed scummy-punk sound as the centerpiece, but they throw in some backing organs to give it a Doors quality, and an occasional King Missile spoken word style. They assault you with disgustingly hilarious song topics, such as "Why Don't We Do It" and "Swimming Pool Filled With Trash," which had me in hysterics. If there were a Dr. Demento for vulgar tastelessness, singles from this album would be prime candidates. (DP)

The Cinnamon Show • *self-titled* • *Snacks Music* • I am forced to admit that when I saw this disc I thought I was in for something peculiar and unique. It started off as such, but then it sort of dwindled into standard radio issue pop music. It isn't particularly bad, but it does not maintain the momentum with which it begins. There is a potential for something very cool here. (MK)

The Deletist • *self-titled* • *Entartete Kunst* • You would be tempted to write off The Deletist as a faint wannabe, with no-wave synth compositions and resigned vocals. However, listen closely and you'll find that there is some really good music here. Some of it could even be called orchestral, even if mostly played on keyboards. (AL)

The Detroit Experiment • *self-titled* • *Ropeadope Records* • Producer Aaron Luis Levinson picked Detroit as the second city in which to record an "Experiment," with Philadelphia as the first. This time around, instead of using a set crew, he and Carl Craig assembled a revolving group of musicians, with little or no rehearsal. The result is more varied than the original, with straight up jazz mixed with some soul and hip hop. (AL)

The Few • *The Few* • *PSB Records* • For a band just releasing its first full-length record, The Few has one of the better web sites I've seen. After seeing their creative and endearing bio, you can't help but like this LA-based trio. Our heroes traveled east to that indie music mecca Athens, Georgia to work with producer Andy LeMaster, best known for his work with Bright Eyes and his own band, Now It's Overhead. The trip was well worth it as the Few returned to LA with a fantastic indie pop album. (CL)

The Garrison Project • *self-titled* • *B-LonG Records* • You get 10 tracks of female-fronted, adult contemporary pop that is uptempo and uplifting, but frankly uncreative and the same old stuff you've probably heard before and didn't like then. At least her vocals are pretty good. (CM)

The Goodwill • *That Was a Moment* • *Negative Progression Records* • The Goodwill is destined to be the next big "thing." Like so many other teenage oriented bands, these guys promote an energetic style that is sweeping the mainstream. Borrowing styles from bands like Good Charlotte, A Simple Plan, and New Found Glory, these fellas are sure to find their glory amongst American teens. SIDE NOTE: This CD was so good my boss felt he needed to steal it. Thanks Chef Feskens. (RP)

The Heavils • *self-titled* • *Metal Blade Records* • The most memorable thing about metal outfit The Heavils is Brian Carter's vocals. They are a bit throaty and angry sounding, but can also be melodic, like a cross between Audioslave's Chris Cornell and Living Color's Corey Glover, with a touch of Pantera's Phil Anselmo. He also builds all kinds of unique-sounding guitars, which get the hell pounded out of them, as will you. (AL)

The Party of Helicopters • *Please Believe It* • *Velocette Records* • Ever hear of "Jesus-fucking-Christ-these-guys-rock-core"? You will after you check out this musical number from the boys in POH. Chock full of blistering riffage and thundering percussion, you will hear a variety of influences in this album. Imagine Cohed and Cambria styled vocals mixed with all the rock of The Fucking Champs, and that's the tip of the iceberg. So start grooming your indie-rock mullet and prepare for the invasion. (RP)

The People Involved • *self-titled* • *self-released* • With a Brit rock sound similar to Bush meets Radiohead, TPI is bound to turn heads and gain fans with a quickness. But they're not British; they're from Los Angeles. And they're not as rockin' as Bush or as brilliant as Radiohead, but they certainly can hold their own. This is a popular band waiting to happen, an MTV2 video waiting to be aired and a college radio hit waiting to be played. Is anyone listening? (CM)

The Plot To Blow Up The Eiffel Tower • *Dissertation, Honey* • *Happy Couples Never Last* • TPTBUTET (wow they have a hell of an anagram don't they?) sound something like a Miles Davis record that wandered too far into your punk rock collection. That also means they sound a hell of a lot like The Nation of Ulysses. With that in mind, everything that's going on here is pretty original, and more than that, it's all bold and challenging and I can never fault that. It grows on you, and it makes you move, it makes you want to see it live. While not perfect, the spirit is all there. (KM)

The Red Hot Valentines • *Calling Off Today* • *Polyvinyl Record Co.* • Indie rock pop with a Moog. This three song EP is a teaser for the full length, *Summer Fling*, that will be released this summer. It's poppy, catchy and definitely the kind of music you can bob your head and sing along to whether or not you want to. I love the moog and unfortunately, without this wonderful instrument, I fear this band would sound like any college rock band, but it gives it some sort of individuality. (MP)

The Scoldees • *Nightcap World* • *self-released* • This is solid adult contemporary pop rock. The music isn't bad, if you like that kind of thing. Frankly, I feel that lead vocalist Nancy Wilson is just a tad bit too emotional for me. The overall feel is pretty depressing. So, if you're putting down one beer too many and you can't take country, this might help you feel cozy. File this under "mid-life crisis music." (CM)

The Secession Movement • *We Need A Hill* • *Keep Safe Records* • So many music geeks, myself included, are distraught over the impending breakup of the Dismemberment Plan. Where will we go for smart, original indie rock? Here's one suggestion: the Secession Movement. They've got some intelligent lyrics, unique arrangements, and more complex rhythms than your standard indie rock fare. If you're down with bands like Shudder to Think, Q and Not U, and the soon to be defunct Plan, check this out. (CL)

The Special Goodness • *Land Air Sea* • *NOS Records* • Pat Wilson from Weezer and Atom Willard of Rocket From The Crypt are the two master minds behind The Special Goodness. Their musical backgrounds can be heard throughout the album, but don't rely heavily on that only. They have brought individual influences to

this creation. These twelve tracks range mostly from rock to pop. The vocals reminded me of Presidents of the United States one moment and They Might Be Giants the next. Songs like "n.f.a." and "life goes by" are some of the catchier ones with great Weezeresque hooks. The album has moments where it tends to lag and could have potential to be mediocre, but then they come right back with a song that gets you singing along. It's definitely an album for you Weezer or Rocket From The Crypt fan to give a listen. (MP)

The Tossers • *Purgatory* • *Thick Records* • Irish masses unite! Chicago's The Tossers are back with 70 minutes of Celtic-influenced punk/folk music, complete with tin flute, mandolin, banjo, and fiddle. I'm not even Irish and go a sudden urge to drink many Guinneses. Go down to your local pub and bring this CD with you, you'll be the life of the party. (AL)

The Young And The Useless • *self-titled* • *Thorpe Records* • Witty band name, clever song titles, and a really bad cover of Journey's "Any-way You Want It"; all this says to me is these guys are trying a little too hard. With hooks and styles liberally borrowed from genre standards Grade, As Friends Rust, and countless fellow South Florida bands, I have to dig pretty deep to find anything original going on. With all that taken into account, I think these guys could be amazing, the vocals are great and musically there is talent. Just nothing original at all. (KM)

There Were Wires • *self-titled* • *Iodine Recordings* • Like their CD cover says, "Fuck the Hives... There Were Wires." This self-titled CD is nothing but tough-as-nails hardcore that will leave you gasping for air. Jaime Mason's vocals couldn't be any more caustic, and Thomas Moses and Don Belcastro's guitar frenzy is full of harshness as well as melody. (AL)

Tim Bluhm • *The Soft Adventure* • *California Recordings* • What's with the explosion of singer/songwriters all recording stuff at once? Maybe it has always been that way. But since the success of people like Elliott Smith and Dashboard Confessional, everyone seems to be doing it. Bluhm is different, though, in that he's been doing it for longer than the aforementioned artists. His music is sincere, slow moving and emotional. It drags a little for me, but there are some poppier, more upbeat tunes mixed in among the 16 tracks that include six new cuts and ten tracks from his 1996 *Colts* album. (CM)

Time Will Tell • *self-titled* • *self-released* • This five-song demo is a strong first effort for this Long Island quintet. They play melodic power punk with some emo and hardcore influences. The songs are catchy, but do pack a bit of a punch. The recording is a little raw, but it's a demo, so fuck it. They're a young band, sure to get better with each release. (CM)

Tipper • *Surrounded* • *Myutopia Records* • After many years of creating eardrum-piercing bass music, Dave Tipper has changed direction. In *Surrounded*, he takes on the chill-out and downtempo genres, adding his own touch. The title refers to the fact that this CD was recorded using 5.1 Surround Sound technology, for a truly enveloping feel. (AL)

Tonya Miller • *Keyhole* • *self-released* • Miller has a background as a jazz singer performing in the greater Boston area for a number of years. In 1996, she began writing her own pop songs, and has now released this 7-song CD. Her sound reflects her jazzy roots with a soft, sultry temperament. She backs her own vocals and plays acoustic guitar on intricately laid tracks, which greatly supplement her wonderful leads. Excellent debut. (DP)

Townhall • *The New Song* • *Townhall Music* • Townhall's sound can truly be described as unique. They blend elements from rock, jazz, blues, funk and folk, and use a ton of instruments. I was reminded of Jamiroquai at times, due to the smooth sounds coming out of my speakers. (AL)

Trenchmouth • *More Motion* • *Thick Records* • I'm skeptical of re-

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☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

releases of bands that never made an impression on me when they were around. I guess it just seems a little self-serving. With that in mind, Trenchmouth does nothing for me, as they did in the '90s. With a sound that is locked into an experimental movement that has long since progressed past the point, there is an obsolescence to this. While they might have been a key evolutionary building block to bands like The Dismemberment Plan, I see no point in revisiting these experiences. (KM)

Various Artists • A Fistful of Rock N Roll Vol. 10 • Devil Doll Records • If they've managed to put out ten of these things, they must be doing something right. You want dirty punk rock? How about 25 tracks of it, with bands like Groovie Ghoulies, Speeddealer, The Strap Ons, Vice Lords and Muddy Frankenstein giving it to you? Yeah, I thought so. (AL)

Various Artists • Atticus...Dragging the Lake II • Side One Dummy Records • Twenty-six tracks, count them! This is a perfect starter kit for anyone about to enter the punk/hardcore/emo scene, with tracks from Rocket From the Crypt, Hot Water Music, Thrive, Blink 182, Dillinger Four, Alkaline Trio, and a whole bunch of others. Many of the tracks have never been released before, including ones by Finch, Dropkick Murphys, Lagwagon, and Hot Rod Circuit. (AL)

Various Artists • Lookout! Freakout Episode 3 • Lookout! Records • The Lookout! and Panic Button labels get together once a year to bring you some tunes from the previous year's albums and EPs, plus some unreleased material. This year features The Queers, Ben Weasel, The Mr. T Experience, The Pattern, and Yesterday's Kids, just to name a few. (AL)

Various Artists • No Escape: A Tribute to Journey • Urinine Records • The latest in a series of tributes that have included Bob Seger and Supertramp, *No Escape...* finds four bands (Ohms, Houston, wafflehouse*, and Traindodge) covering four classic Journey songs. If only it was longer, it might have been more enjoyable. (AL)

Various Artists • Pulse: a STOMP Odyssey • Six Degrees Records • *Pulse: a STOMP Odyssey* is a new film that will be playing in IMAX theaters this year. This soundtrack features 21 tracks that explore percussive music from around the world. Beginning with the opening vocal-percussive track "Beat Box," the fast and upbeat tempo takes you to Brazil, Africa, Spain, India and the United States. As if the music wasn't enough, the Enhanced portion of the CD includes a music video and a Flash application that allows you to mix your own tracks with tons of percussive instruments. (AL)

Various Artists • Punk Ass Generosity II • Devil Doll Records • The second installment in the Punk Ass Generosity Series, this double CD brings you 44 tracks of excellent punk music, as well as cash for some charities. You see Devil Doll donates all the proceeds from this album to various organizations. So go out and help others, plus help yourself to some tunes by A New Found Glory, Gluecifer, Link 80, MU330, No Motiv, The Lawrence Arms, Welt, and Whippersnapper, among others. (AL)

Various Artists • Punk Rock Vol. 2 • 206 Records • This is an amazing mix of five punk bands from around the world. Opening the 24-track release is Darling Daisy from Norway with four songs. They play uptempo, catchy, melodic punk rock that is reminiscent of NOFX and SUM 41. It's tight and quite good. They're followed by Monkey Pirates from Japan offering up six tunes. Their name is funny, but their music is nothing to laugh about. It combines solid, melodic punk with a hardcore intensity and tons of emotion. Next up is Canada's Shift-D, a quartet playing irresistible punk rock that is tight as hell and catchy as a cold. You get five songs from the Canucks, tunes that remind me quite a bit of Digger, but with a little more angst. Then comes a double dose of bands from the USA. The east coast's Bigwheel rocks out five tracks of aggressive, rapid-fire, melodic hardcore, full of tempo changes and head-bouncing melodies. Finally, we get a west coast fix from the Throw Downs, a speed-punk band that will have your head spinning and your feet tapping faster than ever imaginable. Of the five bands, these guys probably have the most dangerous pit. Put together, this compilation is a fantastic, five-way punk fest. (CM)

Various Artists • Radio Dick The 3 Sided LP Series: Volume 1 • Pal-Tone Records • This is the first set of a series that has yet to expand into the future (hence why it's called Volume 1). This CD features three bands, each with four songs. The lineup of bands consists of The American Plague, Windfall, and Vanguard. Hats off to Pal-Tone Records for this remarkable CD of three talented bands, but all with such different styles, and making the CD more diverse and worthwhile to own. The American Plague kick this priceless piece of with a style that takes parts of the Ramones and Hot Water Music mixed with an '80s metal type vibe that I totally dig. When the sadness begins that The American Plague songs have finished, Windfall cheers you up with their tentative pop-punk/punk sounds along with structured songs and female vocals. Last, but definitely not least, Orlando, Florida punk rock legends Vanguard top the CD

off with their intricate guitar riffs, crashing drum beats, and harmonies that are present in all of their songs. Good job, Pal-Tone. I anticipate Volume 2 of this indestructible series of compilations. (CMAX)

Various Artists • Rock-N-Roll Au Go-Go Volume 7 • Devil Doll Records • Holy driving, straight-ahead rock-n-roll, Batman! These four bands do not fuck around, they just pummel you with big guitars, fat hooks, and a metric assload of attitude. If you don't drink whiskey and smoke excessively, you will after you listen to the eight tunes featured on this sampler. (CL)

Various Artists • Smoking Popes Tribute • Double Zero Records • This is a surprisingly good tribute album. For me, I have a hard time with a tribute to a band that only recently broke up (around 1998 for the Popes). But the diversity of bands and quality with which they cover great Smoking Popes songs made me take this release differently. All the "classic" Popes tunes are covered on here, from "Megan" to "I Love You Paul" to "Need You Around" — 13 tracks altogether. The roster of bands includes such rockers as Bad Astronaut, Grade, Junction 18 and The Ataris. (CM)

Various Artists • Unreleased No. 2 • Deep Elm Records • The second in a series, this compilation features ten never before heard tracks from The Applesseed Cast, Benton Falls, Drive Till Morning, Race Car Riot, Camber, Slowride, and other Deep Elm artists. All the songs will appear here and nowhere else, and they even printed the lyrics for you. (AL)

Vicious White Lies • self-titled • self-released • From Olympia, WA comes Vicious White Lies, ready to kick your ass with their X, and Black Flag influenced punk sound. They are fronted by Jenna Riot, whose vocals are both squeaky and somewhat annoying, just like punk should be. (AL)

Waiting For Autumn • Now I Know Forever • American Jealousy • The freshman release from emo rockers Waiting For Autumn, and it has all the good and bad that title brings with it. Full of energy and youthful vigor, these guys know how to rock, how to write songs with plenty of heartfelt feelings and energy. The downside, they rely too much on the well-cleared genre path of emo and never stray from there at all. The foundation is there, and as soon as they can break the formula these guys could do anything. (KM)

Watchers • To The Rooftops • Gern Blandsten • These guys immediately reminded me of Talking Heads. They play indie rock with quirky pop elements, numerous influences and a diverse set of styles. You hear elements of punk, funk, pop and classic rock woven together to create original tunes that'll have you shakin' in your seat. It's hard to deny the infectiousness of this rockin' released. (CM)

We Talked About Murder • Expecting The Explosion • Has Anyone Ever Told You? • Texas • I've had enough of that damn state. Ironic that on the eve of the state's 300th execution that I'm reviewing a disc by a band from Texas called We Talked About Murder is a part, is one redeeming value of the Lone Star state. Produced by Tim Kerr of Monkeywrench fame, *Expecting The Explosion* bears a strong resemblance to the driving indie rock of the DC scene. If I were We Talked About Murder, I'd think about relocating to DC, or anyplace else for that matter, and get the hell out of that state. (CL)

Wes McDonald • Cuttin' Up Rocks • Magical Solution Records • A soulful sort of all-country southern rock. Surprisingly hard-hitting at times, and always with a grassroots feel. Some of the songs remind me of something Ryan Adams would do. Honest, and full of energy, but nothing that really sticks to your bones. (KM)

Where Eagles Dare • In A Thousand Words Or Less • Endwell Records • Naming yourselves after my favorite Misfits song is a great way to win my heart, boys. With a sound that should be straight out of the industrial Northeast, WED keeps the tread going on the new hardcore wagon, sounding like the Black Widows and the Horror Show, with a little bit of Sick Of It All thrown in as well. Good stuff, and from Arizona no less. (KM)

Where Fear And Weapons Meet • Control • Eulogy Recordings • After a two year hiatus, this South Florida band is back with six tracks of punishing hardcore. Unrelenting guitars and pounding drums hammer away while the searing vocals chip away at your ears. The time off has done nothing to dull their sound. In fact, they are as dangerous as ever. (AL)

While They Slept • Parade The Circus Around The Silhouette • Spare Change Press • Hailing from the Twin Cities, WTS plays songs like an ice covered field stuck in a brilliant sunset. Dark, yet brilliant, soft emo-core played with startling heartfelt honesty. The instrumentation is quality, and this whole release survives a few lost moments to be a good experience in the whole. (KM)

Wisdom In Chains • self-titled • Gangstyle Records • I can't get over the fact that all Oi bands sound the same. No disrespect to some who have originality in their type of music, but I just felt like sharing my opinions on

Oi in general, before I come off as some "hater." For an Oi album, this CD is great. It comes off with everything every Oi fan enjoys and you know what I am talking about. I do enjoy the street punk songs on this album, as well as their harmonies and most of their morals, ethics, and values. I just hope that whenever the "Oi Revolution" takes place, bands will open up and not sound like their mentors or idols for a change. Wisdom in Chains are from The Netherlands; that's some prize points in my book. (CMAX)

Xiu Xiu • A Promise • 5 Rue Christine • I think it would be difficult to find a singer with more despondent emotion than Jamie Stewart. Even when accompanied by nothing more than a lilting guitar, his sadness creeps you out. This album also features some orchestral sounds, but it is the sparse songs that get to you. (AL)

Zox • Take Me Home • Zox Music • The violinist sucks you in at first and by the end the rest of the guitar, bass and drum sound spits you out. Vocals were the only thing I needed time to adjust to; the rest of this blended so well you would have thought that music was always supposed to be meshed this way. A solid rock approach highlighted by the violin play of Spencer Swain makes this disc one of the most interesting I've heard in a while. Always at an up tempo pace, influences shine through from the likes of Sublime, The Police, NOFX, Paul Simon, Ben Harper and Green Day. A mixture of electronic rock, punk, reggae and improvising, this disc is well worth checking out. (JC)

Vinyl releases

Grain USA • Catchy Like A Cold 7" • Disposable Pop Revolution • The record title is appropriate. These guys ARE catchy like a cold! There are two tracks of pop rock pleasure on here, and I doubt you'll be able to avoid enjoying them. Self-described as "artsy-fartsy wuss-rock" and "catchy, cathartic, cohesive candy-asses", the press nails it dead on. The first track is a sweet-as-candy uptempo pop number while the second track is equally as infectious, but vocals-free. Both are great tunes. (CM)

Kill Me Tomorrow • self-titled 7" • Gold Standard Laboratories • KMT is a west coast three-piece that creates original music that is hard to define. Their label loosely refers to it as "noir wave": a sort of new wave/no wave, gothic-tinged, electro-post punk. That's better than I can do. There are two tracks on this release, one being a bit more uptempo than the other, which is kind of flowing and somewhat dark in sound. Think Joy Division meets The Cure meets Tom Waits meets Sonic Youth. That's a tough thing to imagine, but it's the best I can do. (CM)

Rock Stone • Cherry Vanilla 7" • Plastic Pancake • Aug Stone (aka Rock Stone) offers up his first solo release. These two tracks are electro-pop numbers sure to please the masses. His style reminds me of The Lightening Seeds, with irresistible melodies and cute, electronic bleeps and loops that really hook you in. Stone's vocals are smooth, drifting freely over the top of the soundscapes of his music. (CM)

Tennis • Pure Evil 7" • Watermark • Tennis are a lot like crack; it might not be the best drug you've ever had, but you simply can't get enough. This is indie pop rock through and through and Tennis performs it both originally and emotionally. They remind me, at times, of The Stereo, but less produced and with more of an honest rock feel. Each of these three tracks is packed with bad-ass hooks and tempo changes that will make you smile with each new trick they pull off. This is one of those bands you are bound to hear plenty more about, so get with it now before you're just part of the bandwagon. (Oh, bonus: It's on clear, green vinyl. Sweet!) (CM)

The Starvations • Horrified Eyes 7" • Gold Standard Laboratories • Wavering, anxious vocals dance over piano-enhanced garage rock on the first track. The flipside features a similar vocal styling, but the music is a bit darker and more depressing, trading in piano for accordion. Together, the two tracks showcase an interesting musical style that escapes classification or genre labeling. (CM)

DVD releases

Noam Chomsky • Distorted Morality "America's War On Terror?" • Epligraph • The only difference between Noam on CD and Noam on DVD is that you get to see all the action...OK to be honest, there really isn't much action. Whatever format, Chomsky is the most important and intelligent voice of dissent our nation has. This release, like his countless others flies easily into the mandatory category. The perks of Noam on DVD are the question and answer section, and the nicely done subtitles (in Chinese as well!). (KM)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

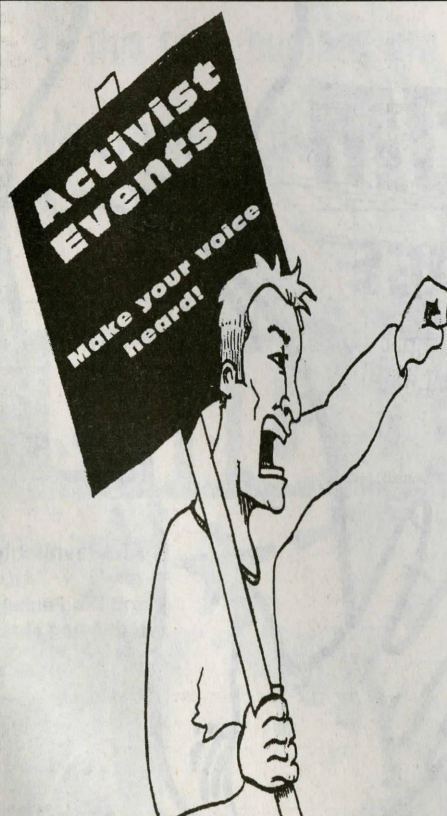
Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

206 Records, 8314 Greenwood Ave. N., PMB 102, Seattle, WA 98103
 482 Music, 853 Sanders Rd. #165, Northbrook, IL 60062
 5 Rue Christine, PO Box 1190, Olympia, WA 98507-1190
 A-F Records, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
 Amazing Grease Records, 1501 Plymouth Ave. San Fran, CA 94112
 American Jealousy, 2796 Sycamore Dr., Ste. 202 Simi Valley, CA 93065
 Anticon, c/o 6months Distribution, 5878.5 Doyle St., Emeryville, CA 94608
 Apple Pi Records, 2848 Woodford Cir., Rochester Hills, MI 48306
 Aquarium Records, 729 South Second St., Mankato, MN 56001
 Ballyhoo Withdrawal Records, PO Box 685257, Austin, TX 78768-5257
 Bi-Di-It Records, 108 W. 39th Street, Suite 600, NY, NY 10018
 Big Dada, c/o Ninja Tune, PO Box 4296, London, SE11 4WW UK
 B-LonG Records, 2 Hemlock Hill Road, Westport, CT 06880
 Break Even Records, PO Box 42469, Philadelphia, PA 19101
 California Recordings, PO Box 2537, Mill Valley, CA 94942
 Centrifugal Phorce Records, no contact info available
 Chaucer, 42 Beech Ave., Chartham Downs, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 7TA
 Cholerio, no contact info available
 Choo-Choo, c/o G. Baxley, 762 Ave. B SW, Winter Haven, FL 33880
 Clashback Recordings, no contact info available
 Constellation Records, PO Box 42002, Montreal QC Canada H2W 2T3
 Cur On A Glider Records, 133 Vannoy St., Atlanta, GA 30317
 Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031
 Datawast Records, PO Box 19401, Cincinnati, OH 45219
 David Clement, 561 Hudson St. Suite #37, New York, NY 10014
 David Francis, PO Box 811, Village Station, NY, NY 10014
 Deep Elm Records, PO Box 36939, Charlotte, NC 28236
 Devil Doll Records, PO Box 37027, Long Beach, CA 90853
 Diaphram Records, PO Box 10388, Columbus, OH 43201
 Discard Records, 3819 Beecher St. NW Washington DC 20007
 Disposable Pop, c/o L. Bellon, 36091 Dalewood Dr., Newark, CA 94560
 Disturbing Records, 3238 So. Racine, Chicago, IL 60608
 Domino Recording Co., Ltd., PO Box 1207, New York, NY 10276
 Dos Hermanas Music, no contact info available
 Double Zero Records, PO Box 7122, Algonquin, IL 60102
 Endwell Records, 19 Stori Rd. Floor 2, Newburgh, NY 12550
 Entartete Kunst, PO Box 41119, San Francisco, CA 94141-1194
 Epitaph Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026
 Eulogy Recordings, PO Box 24913, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307
 Evil Owl Records, 10344 Mississippi Blvd., Coon Rapids, MN 55433
 Fat Wreck Chord, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690
 Fearless Records, 13772 Goldenwest St. 545 Westminster, CA 92683
 File 13 Records, PO Box 804868, Chicago, IL 60680
 Fueled By Ramen, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604
 Gangstyle, Ecrevissestraat 41, 6125 AW Obbicht, The Netherlands
 Geeves Records, 2428 Plantation Dr., East Point, GA 30344
 Gern Blandsten Records, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661
 Gold Standard Labs, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
 Green Rode Shotgun, 195 East Road, Cookeville, TN 38501

Grit, c/o Inebriated Rhythm, 8 Danville St., West Roxbury, MA 02132
 Guidance Recordings, Inc., 160 N Halsted, Chicago, IL 60661
 Handheld, c/o Renzo Bopp, Buerglistrasse 10, CH-8820 Waedenswil
 Happy Couples Never Last, PO Box 36997 Indianapolis, IN 46236
 Has Anyone Ever Told You?, PO Box 161702, Austin, TX 78716-1702
 Hodge Podge, c/o John Kachnowski, 35478 Brookview, Livonia, MI 48152
 Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495
 Dr. Strange Records, PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma CA 91701
 Hydra Head Records, PO Box 990248, Boston, MA 02199
 Ice-Made, 366 Stratford Ave #18, PGH, PA 15232
 iMUSIC, c/o ARTISTdirect, 5670 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 200, LA, CA 90036
 In Music We Trust, 15213 SE Bevington Avenue, Portland, OR 97267
 Innocent Words, c/o Troy Michael, PO Box 674, Danville, Illinois 61834
 Iodine Recs, 1085 Commonwealth Ave., PMB 318, Boston, MA 02215
 Ironman Records, no contact info available
 Jaggiaguar, 1021 South Walnut, Bloomington, IN 47401
 Judas Cradle, PO Box 1445, Grand Central Station, NY, NY 10163-1445
 K Records, Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507
 Karma Records, 120 N. Mill St., Lexington, KY 40507
 Keep Safe Records, 1016 Berlin Rd., Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
 Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State #418, Olympia, WA 98501
 Kindercore Records, PO Box 110969, Brooklyn, NY 11211
 Leisure King, 541 Willamette St. #212, Eugene, Oregon 97401
 Level Plane, PO Box 4329, Philadelphia, PA 19118
 Loner Records, c/o Sandman, 105 N. Sherman, Olympia, WA 98502
 Lookout! Records, 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703
 Magical Solution Records, PO Box 49078 Athens, GA 30604
 Mallory, 2364 Chickasaw St., Cincinnati, OH 45219
 Mark Austin Band, 2414 Maverick Ave., Dallas, TX 75228
 Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065
 Montasando Records, PO Box 20692 Seattle, WA 98102
 Mr. K Records, 5 Reeback Dr., Valhalla, NY 10595
 Mush Records, 1742 Laurel Canyon Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90046
 MuscleTone, 8949 Sunset Blvd., Ste. #203, W. Hollywood, CA 90069
 Mytupia Records, 2231 S. Carmelina Ave., West Los Angeles, CA 90064
 Negative Progression, PO Box 193158, San Francisco, CA 94119
 N.O.S. Recording, 7711 Wish Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406
 No Karma Recordings, PO Box 71203, Milwaukee, WI 53211-7303
 Nook & Cranny Records, PO Box 14381, Gainesville, FL 32604
 Noreaster Failed, 6423 Richmond Hwy. #3204, Alexandria, VA 22306
 Northern Blues Music, 8455 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048
 One Day Savior Recordings, PO Box 372, Williston Park, NY 11596
 Palm, 601 W. 26th Street, 11th Floor, NY, NY 10001
 Pal-Tone Records, PMB 422, 167 Cherry Street, Milford, CT 06460
 Panic Button, 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703
 Pink and Black, Box 190516, San Francisco, CA 94119
 Plastic Pancake, 180 Chemin des Pitous, 82000 Montauban, France
 Polyvinyl Record Co., PO Box 7140, Champaign, IL 61826
 Pop Culture Casualties, 7109 Staples Mill Rd. #300, Richmond, VA 23228
 PSB Records, 265 Santa Helena #110, Solana Beach, CA 92075
 Pumf Records, 25 Ivy Ave., Blackpool, FY4 3QF UK
 Punctuation/Artist Music Grp., 400 SE 9th St., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316
 Purple Skunk, 8362 Pines Blvd., Suite 425, Pembroke Pines, FL 33024

Radical Records, 77 Blecker Street St. #C2-21, New York, NY 10012
 Recluse Records, no contact info available
 Red Buttons Records, PO Box 761 Capintaria, CA 93014-0761
 Red Cake, 2-1-19 Imai-cho, AP203, Kashihara, Naraken, 634-0812 JAPAN
 Reflections, Spoorwegstraat 117 6828, AP Arnhem The Netherlands
 Responsive Records, PO Box 99575, Emeryville, CA. 94662
 Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232
 Robert Barry Construction Assoc., 565 1/2 N Boylston St. LA, CA 90012
 Ropeadope Records, Village Station, PO Box 1021, New York, NY 10014
 Ruff Nation Records, no contact info available
 Saddle Creek, PO Box 8554, Omaha, NE 68108-0554
 Sanity Check Music, PO Box 179, Boyce, VA 22620
 Scene Police c/o dpm, Humboldtstrasse 15, 53115 Bonn, Germany
 Scifyler, 729 Central Ave., #203, Alameda, CA 94501
 Send Me Your Head Records, 1337 1/2 Laventa Terrace, L.A. CA 90026
 Sessions Records, 15 Janis Way, Scotts Valley, CA 95066
 Shinytown Records, 1940-2 Harrison St., Hollywood, FL 33020
 Shut Eye Records, 244 Iswald Street SE, Suite 1-A, Atlanta, GA 30316
 Shut One Dummy Records, PO Box 2350, Los Angeles, CA 90078
 Six Degrees Records, 540 Hampshire Street, San Fran, CA 94110-1417
 Smart Girl Music, no contact info available
 Snacks Music, c/o K. Wiggins, 252 Kingsberry Dr., Somerset, NJ 08873
 Sonic Union, PO Box 57347, Jackson Station, Hamilton, ON L8P 4X2
 Spare Change Press, PO Box 14114 Minneapolis, MN 55414
 Sparring Jocaata, 67 Leuckel Ave. Trenton, NJ 08619
 Spy Hop Records, 353 West Pierpoint Ave. #200, Salt Lake City, UT 84101
 Stalins War, 901 Pellegrini St. Santa Cruz, CA 95062
 Substandard Records, PO Box Berkeley, CA 94701
 Suburban Home Records, PO Box 40757, Denver, CO 80204
 The New Beat, 3100 Sevier Ave. Knoxville, TN 37920
 The People Involved, no contact info available
 The Scolees, c/o Randex Comm., 906 Jonathan Lane, Marlton, NJ 08053
 The Silent Treatment, PO Box 15445, Tampa, FL 33684
 Thick Records, PO Box 220245, Chicago, IL 60622
 Third Earth Music, 784 Columbus Avenue #4M, NY, NY 10025
 Thorpe Records, PO Box 6786 Toledo, OH 43612
 Three One G Records, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177
 Time Will Tell, c/o J. Cannizzaro, 1115 America Ave., W. Babylon, NY 11704
 Tonya Miller, 109 Tremont Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
 Tooth and Nail Records, PO Box 12698, Seattle, WA 98111
 Townhall Music, c/o C. Ballen, 130 Spruce Street, #26A, Philly, PA 19106
 Truckstop Records, 2255 S. Michigan Ave. #4, Chicago, IL 60616
 Trustkill Records, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
 Two Sheds Music, PO Box 5455, Atlanta, GA 31107-0455
 Uninire Records, PO Box 413903, Kansas City MO 64141
 Velocette Records, 83 Walton St., Atlanta, GA 30303
 Vicious White Lies, PO Box 7012 Olympia, WA 98507
 Warp Records, PO Box 25378, London, NW5 3GL
 Watermark, PO Box 1203, NY, NY 10113
 Weird Science Records, CL & OH, Romerstrasse 55a, 53111 Bonn
 Western Vinyl, 91 Kingsland Ave., 1st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11222
 Wind-up Records, 72 Madison Avenue, 8th Floor, NY, NY 10016
 Zedtone Inc, 213 Brunswick Ave, Toronto, OH M5S 2M4
 Zox Music, 277 Gano St., Providence, RI 02906



The Day of Silence Project

When: April 9, 2003
 Where: Across the U.S.
 Info: <http://www.dayofsilence.org/>

Mobilization Against the U.S. Military

When: April 10-15, 2003
 Where: Washington, D.C.
 Info: <http://www.lasolidarity.org/>

2003 NORML Conference

When: April 17-19, 2003
 Where: San Francisco, CA
 Info: <http://www.norml.org>

Protest Against Plutonium Launch

When: May 3, 2003
 Where: Kennedy Space Center, Florida
 Info: <http://www.space4peace.org/>

Biodevastation 7

When: May 16-18, 2003
 Where: St. Louis, MO
 Info: <http://www.biodev.org/>

Shut Down the World Agricultural Forum

When: May 18-20, 2003
 Where: Kennedy Space Center, Florida
 Info: <http://www.space4peace.org/>

6th Annual Jacksonville Hempfest

When: May 31, 2003
 Where: Jacksonville Beach, Florida
 Info: <http://www.jaxhempfest.com/>

G8 Days of Resistance

When: June 1-3, 2003
 Where: Evian-les-Bains, France
 Info: <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/app/free/evian/>

Biodevastation / Biojustice 2003

When: June 20-22, 2003
 Where: Washington, DC
 Info: <http://www.biodev.org/>

Action: Thessaloniki

When: June 20-21, 2003
 Where: Thessaloniki, Greece
 Info: <http://www.action-salonika2003.org/>

Animal Rights 2003 Conference

When: June 27-July 1, 2003
 Where: McLean Hilton Hotel, Near DC
 Info: <http://www.farmusa.org>

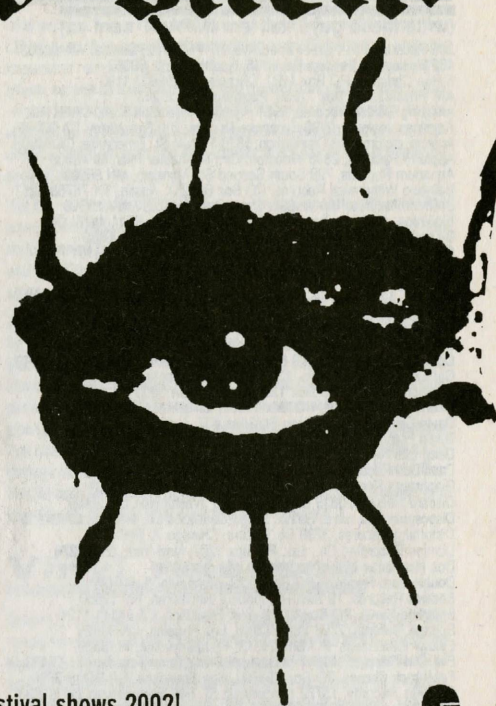
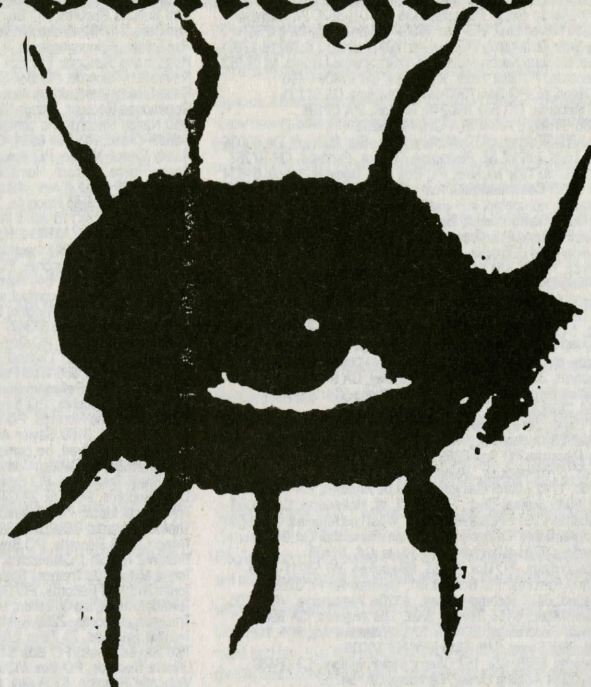
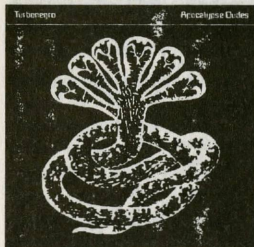
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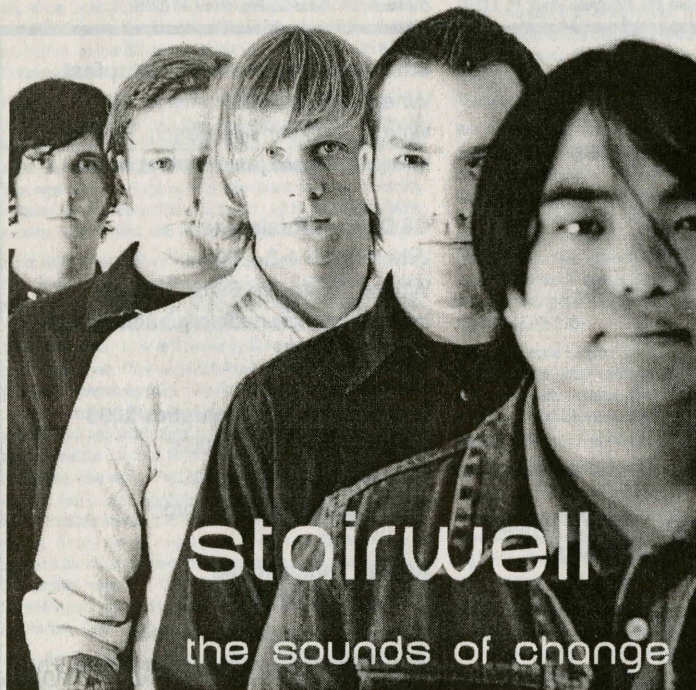


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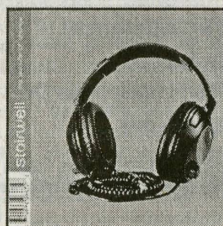


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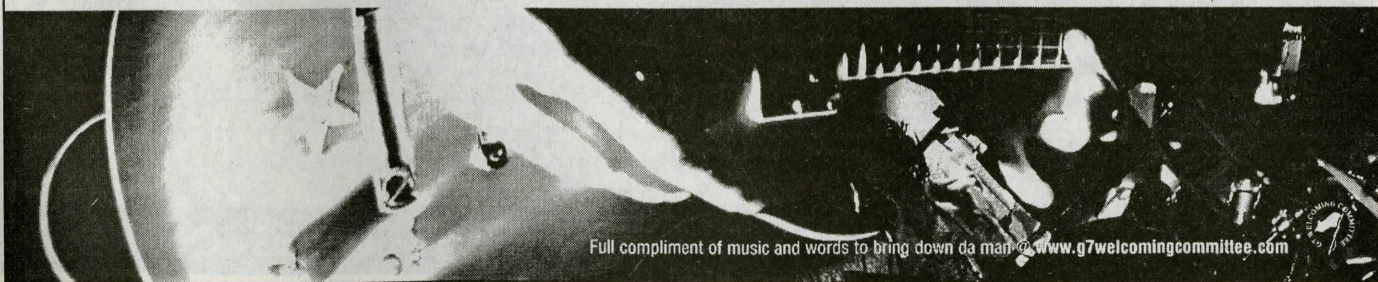
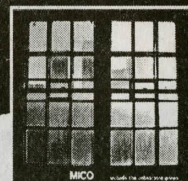
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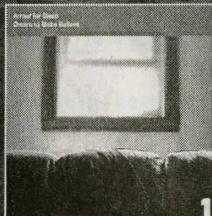
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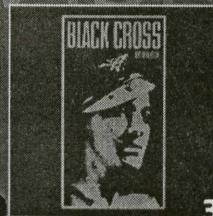
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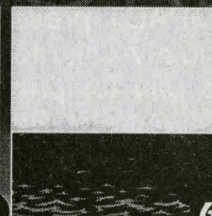
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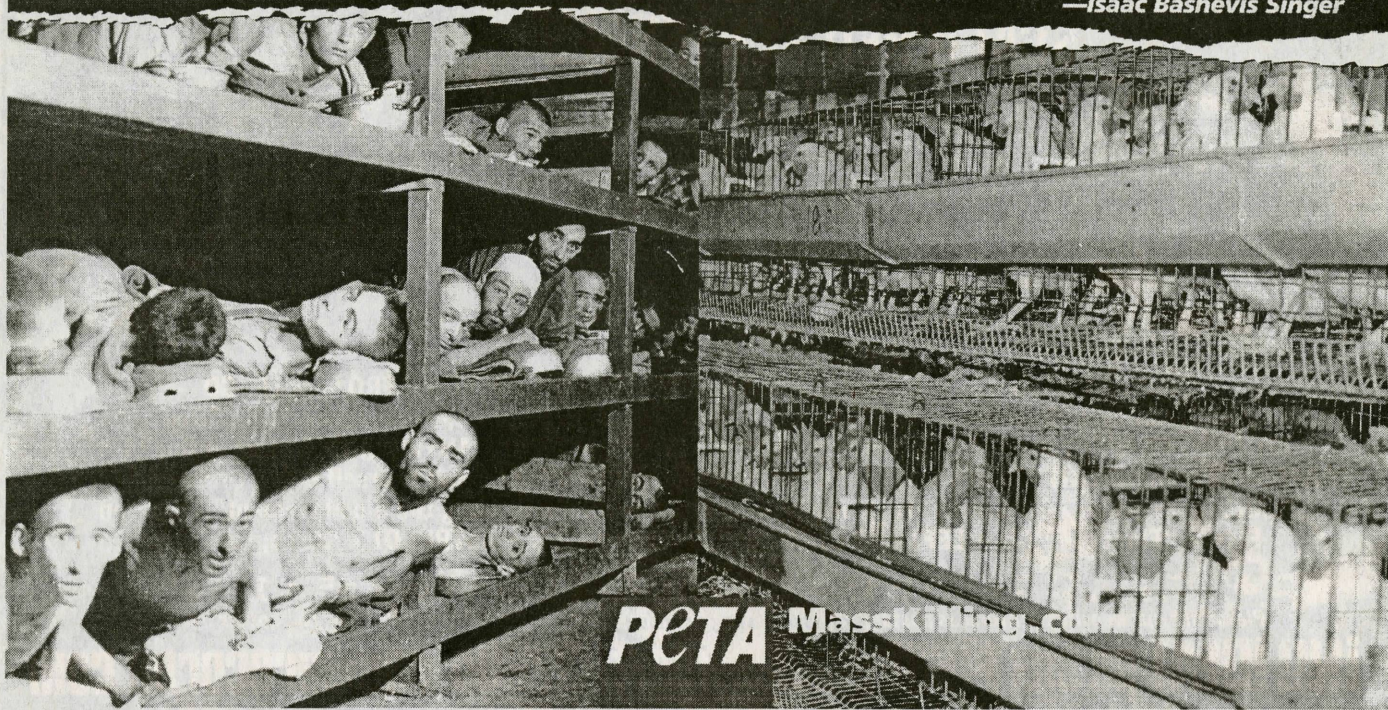
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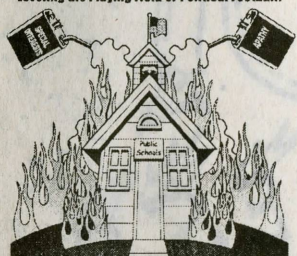
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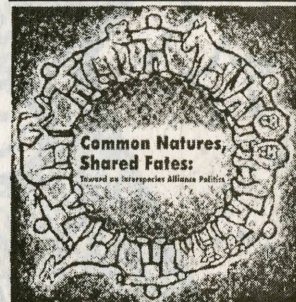
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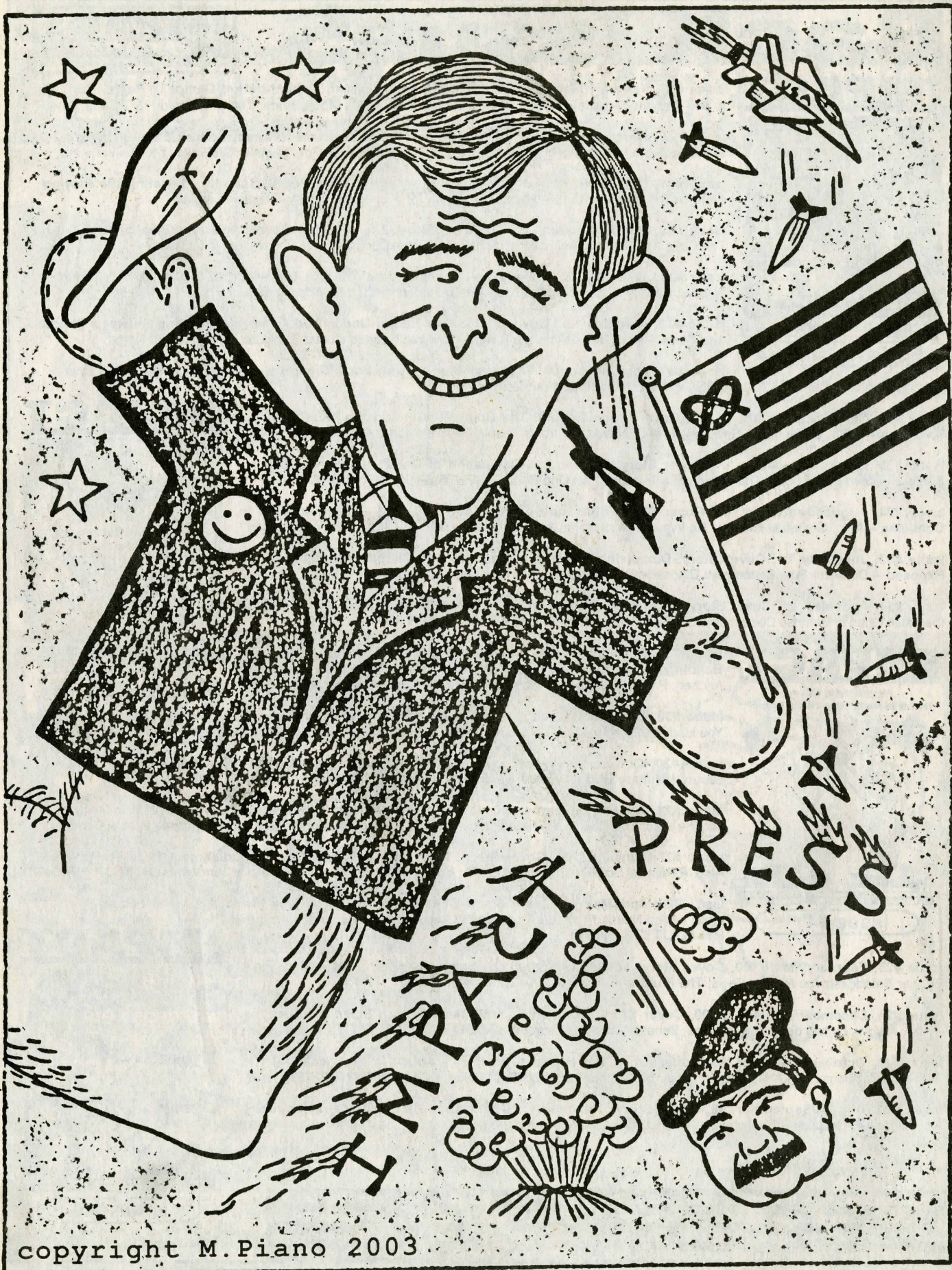
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